

The Blantyre Spiritual Awakening and its Music



Brighton Kawamba



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To my Father and great encourager, Yesaya Stanley Msefula.

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Abbreviations

AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
AIC	African Indigenous Churches
BAEA	The Born Again Evangelistic Association
CCAP	Church of Central African Presbyterian
CLAIM	Christian Literature Association in Malawi
CTJ	Come to Jesus
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAM	Evangelical Association of Malawi
EBCOM	Evangelical Bible College of Malawi
EHC	Every Home Crusade
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
FOY	Fellowship of Youth
GFA	Gospel for All
HCF	Hospital Christian Fellowship
HHI	Henry Henderson Institute
IFES	International Fellowship of Students
LCWE	Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MEFRIPA	Members Friends and Partners
NLFA	New Life for All
PACWA	Pan African Christian Association of Malawi
PIM	Providence Industrial Mission
PRC	Pentecostal Revival Crusade
SCOM	Students Christian Organization of Malawi
SCOMAF	Students Christian Organization of Malawi Alumni Fellowship
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SU	Scripture Union
UDF	United Democratic Front
WEF	World Evangelical Fellowship
WENELA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
YBF	Young Believers Fellowship
ZEC	Zambezi Evangelical Church

Chapter 1: Background and Context

The Blantyre Spiritual Awakening was characterized by an overt evangelistic fervour among bands of people that belonged to an ever growing Born Again Movement in the city, from 1974 into the 1980s.¹ Historically and sociologically it is general knowledge that Awakenings have a context and a situation which prompt them. In most cases it is a reaction either to a typically cultural, moral, social, spiritual or perhaps ecclesiastical situation deemed as untenable or unsatisfactory. An inventory of the causes of the Blantyre Awakening seems to point to a combination of several historical factors.

Historical Context

The 1960s were rattled by a number of socio-political changes. Generally, it was a period of nationalism and independency (which generally featured a popular opposition to colonialism and foreign domination). In a speech titled the 'The Wind of Change' delivered to the white Parliament in South Africa, the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan on 3rd February 1960 summed up the inevitability of political change coming all over the continent and how its impact would transform other facets of African life socio-politically.² On the local scene, the sixties marked the height of Malawi's political belligerence against colonialism and its long protested inclusion in the

¹ In Christianity, being born again refers to a spiritual and metaphorical rebirth, accepting Jesus as the Saviour and Lord and receiving the Holy Spirit. In the Bible, Jesus states that only those who are born again shall see Heaven: "Jesus replied, 'Very truly I tell you; no one can see the kingdom of God without being born again'" (John 3:3).

² Alistair Boddy-Evans is a history and science writer who wrote his article on the "Wind of Change" speech by the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan whilst addressing the South African Parliament during his tour of African Commonwealth states in *Free African History Newsletter* 1960. The speech marked a watershed moment in the struggle of Black Nationalism in Africa and the independence movement across the continent. It also signaled a change in attitude towards the apartheid regime in South Africa.

imposed federation with the two Rhodesias, such that by early 1961 the nationalists engaged the colonial government in negotiating a new constitution (replacing the colonial and federal constitutions which were in place at the time).³

On the spiritual and ecclesial front, churches, particularly of the Protestant Evangelical stream, saw the value of affirmed union under a common Evangelical umbrella organization which they called Evangelical Association of Malawi in 1961. The Association began to position itself against the perceived threat of possible intrusion of liberal theology (from Europe and America) into their mission field Malawi.⁴

A 'Veiled' Reaction against the Political System?

In the early days the Malawi Congress Party had not just a good beginning but a golden one. The popular MCP started as a movement of the people. Orton Chirwa,⁵ who founded the Malawi Congress Party in 1959 in the absence of Kamuzu Banda (who was in prison in Gweru [Zimbabwe] then Southern Rhodesia under the State of Emergency proceedings of 3rd March 1960) was enviably a popular figure who moved the people by the authority he commanded without being authoritarian.⁶

When Kamuzu Banda was released from detention, Orton Chirwa respectfully and voluntarily handed political leadership over to

³ For a somewhat personal account of the events see: Andrew Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis. A Political History of Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2009.

⁴ Int. Willie Musopole, 2001.

⁵ The UK trained Barrister at Law was the young man at the helm of the newly formed Malawi Congress Party, which became a household name overnight as it replaced the banned Nyasaland African Congress under the State of Emergency Statute of 1960.

⁶ For a thorough study of the "Emergency" see: Kings M. Phiri, John McCracken and Wapulumuka O. Mulwafu (eds), *Malawi in Crisis. The 1959/60 Nyasaland State of Emergency and its Legacy*, Zomba: Kachere, 2012.

Kamuzu Banda. His leadership style negated team work and was rather typified by a harsh dictatorship. The prisons burgeoned with political prisoners and prisoners of conscience.⁷ This tarnished the MCP regime both within the country and without before the international community.⁸

The well-oiled propaganda rhetoric of the severely controlled media, however, featured the MCP Regime as the champion of good governance and proponent of the much-touted freedom of worship. The apparently 'veiled' reaction of the Born Again Movement against the MCP regime was neither political nor active resistance as would be the case with civil rights movements.

The Born Again Movement seemed irked by overly lionizing Kamuzu by the MCP and its affiliates, and perhaps what saddened many a Born Again believer was what appeared to be as the unconditional backing of the mainline Protestant churches through their silence and apparent copulation with MCP's strange cultural manifestation in Malawi's religious life.

No worship service was held without observing prayer for His Excellence the Life President from obviously fleeced church pulpits. While the popularity of his regime took a dive, the efforts to make Malawi a police state rose sharply as Hastings Kamuzu Banda often boasted of being a "dictator by the will of the people."⁹

Apparently disgust of the regime could only be expressed in 'secure places' for fear of reprisals from the much feared Special Branch [police secret service] and the ruthless Youth Leaguers and their paramilitary wing, the Malawi Young Pioneers. Even places of entertainment were bugged by the secret service and so Malawi apparently had a hushed peace which was no peace at all.

⁷ John Lloyd Lwanda, *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi. A Study in Promise, Power and Legacy*, Zomba: Kachere, 2009, p. 65.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ John Lloyd Chipembere Lwanda, Draft Version: 'Crises of Democratization' www.nimd.org//mcp.

The Born Again Movement had utter displeasure with the status quo, particularly with the apparent adoration and idolization of the president. The chanting of '*Wamuyaya – Wamuyaya*' [which literally means eternal or one who lives forever] and such songs as '*Zonse zimene za Kamuzu Banda*' [All things belong to Kamuzu Banda] militated against their new-found faith which hailed the Lord Jesus as the preeminent one. It was no wonder that the Born Again preaching ascribed greatness and honour and adoration to God alone.¹⁰

This apparently was an implied rebuke to the MCP for erratically ascribing this greatness to someone else. In some cases this did not escape the ears and discernment of Party diehards. This led to tensions and as a result, quite a number of Born Again preachers and other Apostoli [Apostolic open air preachers] would be reported to the Special Branch of the Malawi Police. Then they would be apprehended and interrogated. Usually they would be released after a day or two for lack of incriminating evidence against them.¹¹

Almost all those that were apprehended and interrogated hinted at similar patterns of interrogation '*Mukulalikira bwanji?*' [How are you preaching?] '*Mukukhala ngati mukulalikira monyoza?*' [It seems you are preaching subversively] and when the Born Again asked '*Ndanyoza ndani?*' [Whom have I spoken against?] '*Mukuti sim'madziwa kuti mukunyoza Ngwazi?*' You mean you did not know that you were dishonouring the Ngwazi [Saviour]? '*Mutiuze ndinu woukira (malebulo) kapena ndinu amboni?*' [Tell us, are you representing Malawi dissidents or are you (a disguised member) of the Jehovah's Witnesses?]¹²

¹⁰ This became one of the most common reasons why Apostolic and Born Again preachers were picked and asked to explain and account for what they were preaching. Among them was pastor Steven Galatiya. For details see: Hany Longwe, *Christians by Grace – Baptists by Choice. A History of the Baptist Convention of Malawi*, Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, Zomba: Kachere, 2011, pp. 453-457.

¹¹ Int. J.D. Sisy, 2000.

¹² The pattern of interrogations was collected from a number of Born Again who were apprehended and interrogated; among whom were McFord

These interrogations particularly intensified following the 1972 MCP convention held at Zomba Catholic Secondary School Hall when Kamuzu declared that the Jehovah's Witnesses were to be dismissed from all employment, and if they owned land it should be taken away by force.¹³ In the process the Jehovah's Witnesses lost their valuable premises on Mahatma Gandhi Road and MCP occupied it and used it as its Regional Headquarters for many years until the dawn of multiparty democracy.¹⁴

The Subtle Claim of Kamuzu as a Christian

Two factors played a role in the way the Church in Malawi was preyed upon. The first factor was that Kamuzu was introduced to the Protestant Christian folk as a Christian, a Presbyterian in good standing with his Church in Scotland by Rev Dr. Cullen Young,¹⁵ a well-respected Presbyterian cleric in the country. The second was that by his own claim he was a Christian and an elder ordained by the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh. Based on these two factors the predominant CCAP church in Malawi and even other Evangelical Protestant churches fell for this and were preyed upon. As a result, Banda won almost blind support of the CCAP and other Christian churches in Malawi. As such the church seemed to have pledged unconditional

Nkhwimba, Wilson Chisambiro, Shadrach Wame and particularly Steven Galatiya who suffered detention under the regime.

¹³ Klaus Fiedler, "Power at the Receiving End: The Jehovah's Witnesses' Experience in One-Party Malawi," in Kenneth R. Ross, *God, People and Power in Malawi. Democratization in Theological Perspective*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1998, pp. 149-176, revised in: Klaus Fiedler, *Conflicted Power in Malawian Christianity. Essays Missionary and Evangelical from Malawi*, Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, 2015, pp. 112-141.

¹⁴ The premises were later reclaimed by the Jehovah's Witnesses and refurbished without suing MCP for damages and illegal occupation following the introduction of multiparty democratic freedoms in the country.

¹⁵ Dr Cullen Young, a retired missionary; see Fulata Lusungu Moyo, "Church and Politics: the Case of Livingstonia Synod" in Kenneth R. Ross (ed), *Church, Law and Political Transition in Malawi 1992-94*, Gweru: Mambo-Kachere, 1997, p. 125.

support to the party, and it had to confirm the 'culture of silence' by not addressing the real issues that affected the people.¹⁶

This attitude and disposition of the church perhaps ranked as number one on the list of things that topped the chart of most disdained things which apparently irked the Born Again Movement. The church was seen as having compromised its position by its clear inability to challenge the status quo. The CCAP led the pack of other Protestant Evangelicals in what appeared as outrightly succumbing to the prevailing 'religion' of overly lionizing Kamuzu Banda. For quite a good period this meant maintaining a culture of silence and dishonestly accepting the MCP slogan: "Malawi has developed beyond recognition under the wise and dynamic leadership of Kamuzu".¹⁷

Born Again Reaction to the Spiritual Lethargy of the Church

Another dominant feature that squarely drew reaction from the Born Again Movement apparently provoking an Awakening was the perceived lethargic spiritual state of various denominations in Blantyre, as they emphasized denominational membership standards more than the standards and values of the Kingdom of God. It seemed also that most mainline churches (from which many Born Again believers came) mirrored a wrong notion of the gospel and a wrong understanding of salvation.

Seemingly, if a member fulfilled denominational requirements such as completion of catechism classes, baptism and partaking of sacraments he or she was deemed as having attained Christian salvation. No efforts were made to impress on the members the requirement of a personal experience with Christ and evidence of conversion. The blistering reaction of the Born Again Movement to all this was that the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 126.

whole process was a mere 'religious circus' derogatively termed '*Chitchalitchitchalitchi*' as opposed to the gospel.¹⁸

Born Again Reaction to Limited Lay Participation in Preaching

A possible reaction of the Born Again Awakening stemmed from the churches' apparent limitation on lay preaching, for it seemed that lay preachers could only preach if they were 'officially sanctioned' by the church. Allowed to preach were *Alaliki* [Evangelists or Catechists] or specially recognized and respected elders of the denomination. Any other lay person was not expected to stand and preach, let alone do what was seen as public witness for Christ. Preaching was the preserve of the specially trained clergy or missionaries or missionaries' wives or the specially recognized Women's Guild officials (these women were restricted however to preaching only to fellow women).

Thus, immediately before the Awakening, a majority of laymen did not consider preaching the Gospel as their vocation because of the apparent obstacles. Those few laymen who tried were frowned upon or were mistaken for Jehovah's Witnesses or Apostoli [Vapostori (Apostolic) preachers] or members of 'mipatuko' [Churches categorized as having strayed from the truth] and would thus undergo some interrogation by the leaders of their denomination '*Mukulalikira ngati ndani?*' [Can you tell us in what capacity are you preaching? '*Ndani wakulolezani kuti muzilalikira?*' [Tell us and reveal the one who permitted you to preach].¹⁹

The tide, however, changed during the Awakening as streams of lay people took to preaching at every vantage point in Blantyre City and surrounding areas. And the church had mixed feelings and reactions about all these developments. This period also saw the establishment of non-denominational choirs and Christian bands such as Kuunika

¹⁸ Representing religious activities without Christ's saving power, possibly quoted from 2nd Timothy 3:5.

¹⁹ Phiko and Wame were respectively summoned several times by their denominations before the former decided to move out as outlined from their personal testimonies.

which changed from being an exclusively St Columba CCAP choir to a non-denominational choir. Come to Jesus Choir started as a non-denominational choir, then there were Deliverance Quartet, Two Brothers in Christ Band, Disciples Band and many others. While many members of the clergy were perplexed with this development, a few like Gideon Bomba (Assemblies of God), Duncan Bwanali (Zambezi Evangelical Church) and Stephen Galatiya (Baptist Convention), who championed spiritual regeneration to break the dead formalism and denominationalism were obviously relieved and happy with the initial developments.²⁰

Supporting Organizations

There is what appears like an intrusion of providence in the story of the Blantyre Awakening. This is so because a historical synopsis seems to show a clear buildup of organizations, situations and events that led to the orchestration of the Blantyre Awakening for which we now have an idea of what 'provoked' it. The story behind what prompted the Awakening requires an appreciation of the development of alliances missionaries built up with two major umbrella organizations: Evangelical Association of Malawi, which played a significant role of indirect influence on the Blantyre Awakening and the Malawi Council of Churches.

Evangelical Association of Malawi and Malawi Council of Churches

The Evangelical Association of Malawi, and the Malawi Council of Churches come from a common rich heritage of early missionary associations that started as far back as 1910 when the first association of churches was the Federated Missions of Nyasaland²¹ which later in

²⁰ Gideon Bomba's historical narration of developments on how denominationalism gave way to inter-denominational fellowships and the Born Again message before 1970.

²¹ Kenneth R. Ross (ed), *Christianity in Malawi*, Gweru: Mambo-Kachere 1996, p. 97.

1934 became the Consultative Board of Federated Missions and in 1962 changed its name to Fellowship of Christian Churches. After 1968 it became the Christian Council of Malawi (which changed to Malawi Council of Churches under the leadership of Augustine Musopole in 1994).

Some members expressed displeasure with apparent liberal leanings and the political activism of the World Council of Churches to which this body was affiliated. These felt the need and urgency to have a forum for unhindered evangelical expression and identity and therefore formed the Evangelical Association of Malawi.²² This Evangelical body in Malawi aligned itself to the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar and became its affiliate. At the international level they affiliated themselves to two major Evangelical bodies, the World Evangelical Alliance/Fellowship [WEF] and the Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization [LCWE].

The formation of the Evangelical Association of Malawi, did not bring much tension on the local scene since some members of the new Association still maintained membership with the Malawi Council of Churches. The two Associations still maintain a close link and partnership on Church and Society issues such as advocacy and development, but still vary on the evangelical emphasis and on devotional hermeneutics.

The Evangelical Association of Malawi

The renaming of the Evangelical Association of Nyasaland coincided with the reconstitution of the body from a mere alliance of evangelically minded missionaries to a functioning coalition of Malawi's Evangelical churches (with full participation of Malawians themselves). The major and nationally strategic activity by the EAM was its coordination of a well-attended united prayer for its member churches and missionaries. These prayers were held at Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP.

²² Jack Selfridge, *Jack of All Trades Mastered by One*, Evanton, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1996, p. 185.

Meanwhile the Evangelical Association of Malawi, through the network of its member churches, got to know Jack Selfridge, a Scottish faith missionary who was operating from his base in Mzimba in 1957. EAM greatly appreciated his illustrious ministry in that region and invited him to speak at its maiden Keswick Convention in Blantyre in 1962, and from that time he was invited to speak every other year till the 1968 Keswick Convention. Jack Selfridge's preaching ministry also took him to the neighbouring countries of Zambia and Zimbabwe then Northern and Southern Rhodesia respectively.²³

His fundamental message was that people must have an experience with Christ and must be born again. His Born Again message was apparently well received by quite a number of people within the membership of EAM among whom were Kenneth Luwani,²⁴ Willie Musopole,²⁵ J.D. Sisya,²⁶ Wilson Chisambiro,²⁷ R.S. Mwandidya²⁸ and also their wives.

Apart from Jack Selfridge's contribution to the propagation of the Born Again teaching to the EAM Church membership, the Association also enjoyed a steady flow of visiting revival preachers (particularly those from the East African Revival) who emphasized confession of sin to God, and confession of sin and faults to one another, and also taught about repentance in Jesus' name and emphasized restitution of stolen

²³ Ibid., p. 134.

²⁴ He became a prominent figure within EAM and also head of the Christian Service Committee which grouped both Protestant and Roman Catholics during his era.

²⁵ Willie Musopole was professionally trained as a rising star in the civil service and as well as an active Christian youth counsellor and a well travelled gospel statesman. He rose to become Deputy Commissioner of Taxes.

²⁶ He was then a young man who was rising in his accounting profession but crossed paths with the MCP regime and was detained for a considerable time.

²⁷ Chisambiro was an intelligent and skilled artisan who quickly rose through the ranks attaining the position of Regional Technical Officer within the field of Trade Testing in the Ministry of Labour.

²⁸ A prominent Blantyre business man and farmer resident at Mpemba in Blantyre.

property. Like with Selfridge, their teaching made personal experience with Jesus Christ as the priority and the initial genuine Christian experience. When they had occasions to speak to church leaders, they emphasized spiritual regeneration as the bedrock from which all church teaching must arise, and this was in direct opposition to what many churches were teaching their members and catechism classes at that time. Apparently their message and teaching epitomized the underlying features of the East African Revival, which formed their theological framework and devotional orientation.²⁹

The Evangelical Association of Malawi created a number of ministries for the benefit of the churches under its umbrella: Blantyre Keswick, the bi-monthly Christian Life Rallies and the women's programme PACWA.³⁰ On the evangelistic front the organization had two prominent groups, New Life for All³¹ and a youth group named Gospel for All.³²

Evangelical Association of Malawi and its Search for Alliances

Following its formation or reconstitution the Association looked beyond the borders of the country for alliances with other Evangelical organizations. The immediate contacts were with Evangelical associations in the East African region, an area which had been inundated by the East African Revival.

²⁹ Among these a young promising intellectual and theologian, Byang Kato, who was originally from Nigeria but was living in Nairobi Kenya and later became the General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar.

³⁰ Isabel Apawo Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1993, p. 140.

³¹ New Life for All itself served as an umbrella group of smaller evangelistic groups called prayer groups in the suburbs of Zingwangwa, Chilobwe, Chimwankhunda, Ndirande and Bangwe.

³² Gospel for All was first briefly led by Don Nyangulu in 1978, later Eston Kakhoma was unanimously voted to lead the group and he did so until 1982.



The AEAM 1981 conference was held at Lilongwe Teachers' College when it was newly built

The Association also joined the continental organization, the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar and affiliated to other global organizations like the World Evangelical Fellowship and International Fellowship of Students (IFES) from which the local organization Student Christian Organization of Malawi (SCOM) was 'birthed' in 1961³³ under a young and zealous ordained minister by the name Franklin Chunga, and the initial success of this body hinged on his vision and focus.³⁴

³³ Int. Willie Musopole, 2001.

³⁴ Franklin Chunga was an ordained minister of Livingstonia Synod and founder of SCOM in 1961 and served briefly in the Malawi Government as its Chairman of the Censorship Board before going into exile as a missionary in the UK.



AEAM Conference in Johannesburg in 1997. Seated in front in coloured shirt is Dr. Augustine Musopole, right behind Francis Mkandawire holding a black bag stands Willie Musopole to his left stands Stephen Fula. Esme Chombo can be seen partially

Students Christian Organization of Malawi (SCOM)

Franklin Chunga's vision and ministry was directed at impacting and shaping lives of young men and women to be ardent followers of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Throughout his tenure as founding General Secretary of the movement Chunga travelled the whole country impacting young people for Christ particularly in Blantyre, which had a fairly great number of students because major centers of learning were concentrated there.³⁵ His preaching and the story of his regeneration/conversion experience moved quite a number of young

³⁵ The University of Malawi and a number of colleges which included Mpemba School of Administration and other institutions such as Blantyre and Chichiri Secondary Schools, HHI and Blantyre Teachers' College.

people and led them to repentance.³⁶ SCOM was related to the earliest influences of the regeneration experience particularly among the student communities in Blantyre and Zomba.³⁷ The initial Born Again teaching in Blantyre can be traced to a crop of young bright students who accepted Christ as Lord and Saviour and lived to impact young people.³⁸

Related Developments towards the End of the Sixties

New Life for All and Scripture Union were established in Blantyre after eight years of revival. New Life for All opened its offices on Livingstone Avenue in Blantyre in September 1969. This followed the Evangelical Association of Malawi reaching agreement that two members were sent to Malawi by the Evangelical Church of West Africa.³⁹ The Association overwhelmingly recommended Born Again protagonist Jack Selfridge to run the new Evangelistic organization in Malawi whose mandate was to be an evangelistic expression of the EAM.⁴⁰

Scripture Union opened its doors in Blantyre immediately following the opening of the doors of New Life for All in Blantyre. Ralph Hanger, a Briton and founding General Secretary of the movement engaged

³⁶ Among whom were Kilowe Mkandawire and Augustine Musopole, who later became the movement's General Secretary.

³⁷ The leadership of the major organizations which became the flag carriers of the Awakening in Blantyre like New Life for All, Gospel for All, Dorothea Mission, SCOMAF and PRC and others came from the student community who were once active in SCOM.

³⁸ Int. Willie Musopole, 2000.

³⁹ Evangelical Church of West Africa in Nigeria (the result of the Sudan Interior Mission's work) under the youthful leadership of Paul Gofo Gunen Gindiri, Nigeria's foremost prolific preacher and revivalist. His church had the rights to use material from Evangelism In Depth and rights to represent interests of Evangelism In Depth in Africa and oversee New Life for All programmes on the continent. See: Yusufu Turaki, *An Introduction to the History of SIM/ECWA in Nigeria 1893-1993*, Jos, 1993.

⁴⁰ Quoted from the unpublished history "NLFA. 30 Years of New Life for All Work in Malawi" p. 3 with permission from Mr Willie Musopole.

both Christian Council of Malawi and some members of the Evangelical Association of Malawi on the possibility of opening a Scripture Union office in Malawi.⁴¹

Questions were raised in some quarters on whether this new organization would duplicate what SCOM was already doing in the schools in the country, but the answer that was given was that Scripture Union would complement what SCOM was doing. Schools would not have Scripture Union fellowships, however, students would study the scriptures using SU Bible Study aids like Daily Power and adult students, particularly in senior classes, would study the Daily Guide.

Apart from its work in schools the organization indicated its readiness to reduce Bible illiteracy by opening up township Bible Study groups. This creative approach to Bible teaching won the hearts of church leaders and there was mutual support for the organization to register in the country and later that year Scripture Union registered and opened its offices almost at the same time New Life for All was launched.⁴²

Dorothea Mission

Dorothea Mission was not a completely strange name in Evangelical circles in Malawi for the ministry had had a satellite mission in Malawi from 1972 to 1974,⁴³ because five or six years earlier Shadreck Maluka

⁴¹ Int. Readson Galatiya, 2001.

⁴² Information from Makwemba Dzonzi who succeeded Ralph Hanger as General Secretary of the organization immediately he finalized his theological training in the UK.

⁴³ Teams that preached the Gospel were sent time to time from Zimbabwe to preach in Malawi or Zambia and then would go back to their headquarters until the latter part of 1974 when serious negotiations with the Evangelical Association of Malawi led to the Association offering to sponsor and facilitate its registration and even offering some of its members to be in the board of trustees of this new ministry for credibility purpose with government which was growing wary of new spiritual organizations.

came under the auspices of this organization and preached his gospel of spiritual regeneration and repentance in almost all member churches and in the educational institutions under the umbrella organization of Evangelical Association of Malawi.⁴⁴

The Evangelical Association of Malawi enjoyed a reputed and respected image before the Malawi Government, which was known for treating any new organization as suspect unless a trusted organization offered its backing or endorsement. Dorothea ministry used this same route to gain recognition by the Government of Malawi and finally got registered as a para church organization.⁴⁵ Stephen Lungu was the founder of Dorothea Mission in Malawi. The Association presented some of its members known to government as members of the Board of Trustees of Dorothea Mission for government to register it. The team leader for the new organization humbly operated from the house of his mother in law in Ndirande until 1983:

Stephen Lungu was the oldest son of a teenage mother, married off by her parents to a much older man and living near Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). When he was three, his mother ran away, leaving him and his younger brother and sister in the reluctant care of an aunt. By age 11 Stephen too had run away,

⁴⁴ His compelling testimony as a castaway child who never knew his mother having been picked from a dustbin hours after his birth and his conversion and his well oiled oratory in the Zulu language made him an evangelist who had great impact on the member churches of the Evangelical Association of Malawi.

⁴⁵ Following the nasty fight against the Jehovah's Witnesses, the government of Malawi became allergic to almost any new spiritual organization that sought registration in the country. However, because the Evangelical Association of Malawi was considered credible, all organizations with its blessing got the government's nod. Perhaps a clear example was how Trans-world Radio was rebuffed and rejected by the government of Malawi when they directly approached government on their intention to plant the first Gospel Radio Station in Southern Africa. They ended up packing their bags and opening their station in Manzini, Swaziland.

preferring life on the streets. He slept under bridges and scavenged from white folks' dustbins. As a teenager, he was recruited into an urban gang, the Black Shadows, which burgled and mugged with a half-focused dream of revolution. When an evangelist came to town, Stephen was sent to fire bomb the event, carrying his bag of bombs and mingling with the crowd. Instead he stayed to listen. Today, Stephen is Africa's Billy Graham, an international evangelist who regularly speaks in UK, US and Europe.⁴⁶

His associates in this ministry were Ezra Mchakulu and Major Jimu and they were later joined by a prolific young preacher, Goliati Namizinga. The three had earlier operated together in Zimbabwe before Jonas Ngozo and Ezra Mchakulu were sent to Zambia to open a branch in Zambia as residential Evangelists in that Country. Zimbabwe remained the Central African headquarters for Dorothea Mission.⁴⁷

Every Home Crusade

The founding of Every Home Crusade in Malawi by John Nyirenda was considered significant and relevant because of the compelling data from the focused group discussions that highlight the role Every Home Crusade played in the Awakening. Every Home Crusade opened its offices in 1974 with minimal official involvement of the Evangelical Association of Malawi. However, John Nyirenda put several notable personalities in EAM on the board of trustees of his organization.

The organization was well funded and it was probably the richest evangelical entity in the country, and along with the level of affluence came the influence it exerted on the masses, particularly in Blantyre, Mulanje, Lilongwe, Nkhotakota and Mzuzu and to a certain extent in Karonga. The strongest networks of Every Home Crusade were in the

⁴⁶ Anne Coomes, *Out of the Black Shadows: the Amazing Transformation of Stephen Lungu*, London: Monarch Books, 2004, p. 3.

⁴⁷ In 1962, Dorothea Mission held a major evangelistic crusade on the outskirts of Harare in Zimbabwe. This opened the door to a permanent work in Zimbabwe, including a training centre for evangelists. Then work extended to Malawi and Zambia.

City of Blantyre and in the tea growing districts of Thyolo and Mulanje.¹⁴⁸ At the world stage Every Home Crusade was a big organization:

Every Home for Christ International was founded in 1946 from the founder's small garage in Saskatchewan, Canada, and the ministry has experienced significant international growth. Originally operating as a radio broadcast ministry called Tract Club of the Air, which made tracts available free to all who requested them, EHC founder, Jack McAlister, expanded the vision globally and by 1952 changed the name of the ministry to World Literature Crusade, moving the headquarters to Southern California. During those same early years, it became clear to Jack that to reach a nation literally with the Gospel, the only certain, measurable way was to take the gospel message systematically, home by home, which was the early Church method. Thus, in 1953 the first Every Home Campaign was born in Japan. Before long, Every Home Campaigns were conducted globally. (To date Every Home Campaigns have been conducted in 192 nations.) In order to reflect the nature of this global focus more fully, the international name of the ministry was changed in 1987 to Every Home for Christ (EHC). For nearly 60 years, Every Home for Christ (EHC) has been working actively throughout the world with more than 500 mission agencies and denominations to strategically plant the gospel message in hundreds of millions of homes all over the world through door-to-door, face-to-face evangelism contacts.¹⁴⁹

Conclusion

Jack Selfridge was like a distant but consistent rumbling voice of the Born Again Movement as early as 1962 in Blantyre. The Evangelical

⁴⁸ At the local level Every Home Crusade was founded by Baptist minister John Nyirenda. He registered it as a stand alone organization loosely connected to the Evangelical Association of Malawi, but closely aligned with Providence Industrial Mission and Baptist Convention of Malawi because he belonged to this fold. He also had in the board Rev Gideon Bomba and Rev Duncan Bwanali among the notable churchmen in the City.

⁴⁹ "History of Every Home Crusade," *Ministry Watch*, 2000, pp. 1-4.

Association of Malawi contextually is seen as playing the role of a vehicle that steered prayer across the span of its membership in the country. Most records of revival indicate that revival happens when there is a spiritual dissatisfaction and agitation against the status quo socially, culturally, morally and ecclesiastically. Prayer seemed to be an option for EAM for two reasons: the uncertainties of a possible invasion of liberal theological influences and the uncertainties that were posted by the side effects of political nationalism which seemed to fan indigenous people's obstinacy and outright rebelliousness to anything "missionary or foreign" as white missionaries in some cases were blindly twinned with their most hated white counterparts, the colonialists [notoriously known by their derogative term '*Atsamunda*'].

Each day brought in its own baggage of uncertainties and in turn EAM strengthened its prayer programmes. This was not only practically logical but also a spiritually desired outlet for all these pressures which were impacting and pressing on the body of Christ in that hour. The cry for strong Evangelical witness, presence and identity over the years 1961 to 1968 was presumably answered by the oncoming Revival. This perhaps cements the claim this work seeks to satisfy. 'Prayer seems to be in all historical cases an antecedent of revivals. The eighteenth century missionary exploits of the Moravians grew out of the around the clock, calendar chain of prayer that continued for more than a century. That chain of prayer sparked the Wesleyan Revival in eighteenth-century in England. The praying Moravians influenced William Carey, the Baptist trailblazer and pioneer missionary to India. Those prayers may well have stoked the fires of revival under Theodore J. Frelinghuysen, Gilbert Tennent, and Jonathan Edwards in eighteenth century New England.⁵⁰

The roles played by the people and groups and organizations so far described in this work will be further unravelled in the following historical narration of the buildup of the Awakening. What seemed clear from the outset is that the Revival phenomenon stirred up the ways of doing church differently in Blantyre.

⁵⁰ D. Miles, *Introduction to Evangelism*, Nashville: Broadman, 1983, p. 221.

Chapter 2: The Birth of the Born Again Movement

One of the most valued questions in this work is to extrapolate from the information gathered whether there is an actual day, time or period the Born Again Movement was born in Blantyre. The task will be to reflect on developments on the local scene against the perspectives of possible historical influences, interactions and events of the same phenomenon at the global level.

The Born Again Movement was associated with the evangelical renewal since the late 1960s, first in the United States and then later around the world. Associated perhaps initially with Jesus People and the Christian counterculture, *born again* came to refer to an intense conversion experience, was increasingly used as a term to identify devout believers. By the mid-1970s, *born again* Christians were increasingly referred to in the mainstream media as part of the Born Again Movement.¹

Development of the Born Again Movement within the Keswick Conventions

The first Keswick Convention in Blantyre was held in August 1962 under the auspices of the Evangelical Association of Malawi: The convention was mostly patronized by people in Blantyre and was well supported by a fairly good number of missionaries from Chididi Mission, Zambezi Evangelical Church and those from Nyasa Mission in addition to those that travelled all the way from Nkhoma Synod.²

The speaker at this convention was the Association's Evangelism Secretary Jack Selfridge. Selfridge's teaching sermons covered such critical areas as the dynamics of the grace of God, and the reality of new life in Christ. In his exposition he used such terms as 'Born Again' and 'New life in Christ' interchangeably almost at free will. Jack Selfridge ultimately challenged the convention patrons to be sure of this one thing, that they had a clear personal testimony of salvation and

¹ Wikipedia, San Francisco: 2001.

² Kenneth Luwani and his wife attended this meeting at Chichiri High School in Blantyre.

assurance of its validity.³ The 1962 initial convention recorded a few momentous conversions, among whom were Kenneth Luwani and his wife Hilda, R.S. Mwandidya, Mai Kachale of Ndirande and a few others.⁴ Almost all these were apparently Christian but not as outlined and characterized by preacher Jack Selfridge.

As was usually the case with Jack Selfridge's teaching on being Born Again, it seldom went without controversies as also was the case at this convention. Two missionaries, one a Presbyterian and another from the Zambezi Evangelical Church, expressed serious reservations on the teaching but this, however, did not have any sway on the unity in the Association or the cohesion of the parties involved in running and organizing the Blantyre Keswick Convention.⁵

The Blantyre Keswick Convention was organized by a subcommittee appointed by the EAM to oversee this function.⁶ The initial committee was constituted of both Malawians and Blantyre based white missionaries.⁷ The Keswick Convention marked a paradigm shift in Blantyre's denominational relationships and spirituality. Self-protective denominational walls were considerably broken down as the Convention served like a public manifestation that churches of different

³ Selfridge admits that even some fellow missionaries and other white expatriates found his teaching a bit odd and often he was required to clarify what he meant by his "born again" teaching, usually referring them to the commonly cited biblical discourse of Jesus and Nicodemus in John 3.

⁴ R.S. Mwandidya represents a string of prominent businessmen and women who put their resources at the disposal for the promotion of Revival Evangelism—these resources included personal saloon cars, lorries and mini-busses, and their houses for prayer and planning meetings of evangelistic activities. Mwandidya's homestead is situated on the road to Mpemba beyond Stella Maris Secondary School.

⁵ Int. Kenneth Luwani, 2000.

⁶ This committee was later recognized as a branch of the EAM ministries and had a permanent committee of its own in which Kenneth Luwani, Willy Musopole, James Chimwaza and a few others served as committee members.

⁷ Among these missionaries were Annie Duffy from Ireland, Robert Barr and Magnus Udd both from the United States and Terry from the UK.

traditions can put their act together, and work and worship together successfully. In a way this encouraged some churches that were apprehensive about the whole question of working with other churches cross-denominationally. In some way the Convention offered by default perhaps what appeared as an admonition, particularly to big denominations like the Blantyre Synod of the CCAP which apparently sat on the sidelines when all these interdenominational efforts were being exerted and getting positive results.⁸

The church denominations in Blantyre never remained the same following the birth of the Blantyre Keswick Convention. For a while the Blantyre Synod's indifference persisted as the establishment remained aloof, but its membership led by the liberal thinking of Reverend Mkunga and his church members at St Columba CCAP embraced the Blantyre Keswick Convention programmes, and gradually some of the church elders and clergy joined the masses in patronizing the Blantyre Keswick Conventions. Some of these leaders later were appointed to play some significant roles in the Convention's ministry including presiding over Holy Communion on the closing day of several Conventions. The Keswick Convention operated under the winsome Motto 'All one in Christ' to which many positively nodded in approval.⁹ The Blantyre Keswick Convention Committee continued to organize the conventions in the City for over thirty five years with great success.

Local and International Speakers

The Convention Committee invited important speakers from around the World. Among them were Byang Kato, the head of the Evangelical Association for Africa and Madagascar, Bishop Festo Kivengere from the East African Revival, and Africa Enterprise Evangelist Wilson, both from

⁸ It is important to note that Blantyre Synod never joined the Evangelical Association of Malawi despite its sister synods of Nkhoma and Livingstonia being part of it.

⁹ Gideon Bomba stated that the Convention was the EAM's public gesture that Church unity was practically feasible through interdenominational worship and fellowship as the One Church of Jesus Christ in Blantyre putting a break to many years of rigid divisions and suspicions in church denominations.

Uganda, Lauren Cunningham, the then international head of Youth With A Mission, Paul Evans from Wales in the UK, Ebenezer Sikakane, now a lecturer in Canada, Michael Cassidy, the retired head of Africa Enterprise and Ghanaian prolific speaker Ms Florence Yeboah and Kenyan Christian counsellor and conference speaker Ms Gladys Mwiti.¹⁰

Among the many groups that visited the churches of the Evangelical Association of Malawi from 1962 to 1968 was a team which was headed by a young seasoned evangelical theologian and preacher, who initially came from Nigeria but was resident in Kenya, where he was the leader of the Evangelical Association of Africa and Madagascar. The man's name was Byang Kato. Kato and his team spoke to a number of church groups under the Evangelical Association of Malawi and its organizations, including a meeting specially arranged for the Blantyre Keswick Committee and others that were considered as front runners of the EAM work in Blantyre. Dr Byang Kato spoke to this group with passion and inspiring eloquence.¹¹ He was a fiery opponent of liberal theology and wasted no time to disparage it.¹² The Evangelical Association of Malawi found not only an ally in Kato but also appreciated very much his anti-liberal theology as a welcome development and a timely encouragement and perhaps a tonic for evangelicalism in Malawi. Dr. Kato's speeches to all groups were full of passion and intellectually inspiring.¹³

¹⁰ Information gathered from Laban Banda, the longest serving secretary of the Keswick Convention.

¹¹ Kenneth Luwani and Willie Musopole attended his meetings and communicated just how impressed they were with the young and wise Kato as he eloquently exposed his theological convictions to the Malawi church leaders.

¹² Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity: Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modern Africa*, Edinburgh: Regnum Books, 1999, p. 387.

¹³ Int. Willie Musopole, 2001.

Developments at the Keswick Convention 1967

The Blantyre Keswick Convention 1967 was, to a certain measure, like the fifth anniversary celebration of the founding of the Evangelical Association of Malawi. The level and skill of organizing these meetings had drastically improved and the profile of both the Evangelical Association of Malawi and the Blantyre Keswick Convention was sky high and the annual Convention was gradually becoming a landmark in the nation's spirituality as it served as the first visible and public interdenominational evangelical fellowship.

The 1967 Keswick Convention stands as the first convention which was logistically well planned and well publicized on the National Radio and also in every church denomination that was under the umbrella of EAM. The convention was attended by people from all the regions of the country who came to Blantyre for a seven day convention. Since conventions were held in August when most learning institutions were closed for holidays, quite a good number SCOM senior members from other secondary schools country-wide came to attend the convention and most of these were accommodated in the homes of friends in Blantyre.¹⁴

The Blantyre Keswick Convention organizers worked out a very systematic prayer and comprehensive programme several weeks before the convention. The intention of the planners was to achieve maximum prayer coverage of the convention to ensure that God brings in conversions and spiritual renewal. The results following this good preparation and planning were overwhelming and from that year crowds filled Chichiri Hall to capacity and people who were from outside the umbrella group of EAM attended in large numbers.¹⁵ Organizers were astonished that Keswick Conventions also attracted

¹⁴ Kilowe Mkandawire, a secondary school teacher in the Northern Region was among those who came all the way to attend the Keswick Convention in Blantyre.

¹⁵ These included members of the Roman Catholic Church, members and some church elders from St Michael and all Angels of Blantyre Synod, and other smaller churches like Forward in Faith, Chikondano and others.

people who generally were classified as non church goers or as irregular attenders. From that year on this trend tended to build up almost for the next thirty five years. The permanent venue of the Keswick convention was the elegant building of the then Chichiri High School Hall.¹⁶

Keswick Convention week normally took place in either mid or late August because the schools were closed at that time. Keswick was the earliest interdenominational gathering and occasion which enjoyed the patronage of people from all walks of life in Blantyre if not in the whole country. The word preached at Keswick conventions, particularly when Jack Selfridge addressed them, moved people to repentance among whom were those that were encouraged to go back to their church which they had for a long time forsaken. Others simply rededicated their lives. The mix of Jack Selfridge and other notable speakers from around the world who were invited to speak at the Blantyre Keswick Conventions offered a window for the Blantyre residents and the opportunity to encounter Jesus as both personal saviour and Lord. It seemed that the seeds of the Born Again revival were consistently being planted by the efforts of the Convention. 'In revival God is said to arise and come to his people, in the sense of making his holy presence felt among them so that his reality becomes inescapable, and the infinite ugliness, guilt, and pollution of sin is clearly seen.'¹⁷

From 1967 the Blantyre Keswick Convention organizers strategically planned that the Convention catered for people of different age groups as shown in the table.

At the end of 1967 some Blantyre churches who were as yet not registered members of the Evangelical Association encouraged their members to attend the Keswick Convention, and many of their elders and officials opted for cooperation with the Keswick Convention. The following women Annie Duffy, Mrs Sutcliffe, Jack Selfridge's wife and others like Hilda Luwani, Mrs. Ngomani, Mrs. Kachale, Ruth Mkolesia

¹⁶ Laban Banda's recollections of the history of Keswick, 2002.

¹⁷ Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright (eds), *The New Dictionary of Theology*, Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 1994, p. 224.

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5.00-6.00	MBC-Sunday Morning Service- Keswick Main speaker					
9.00 to 10.00	Preaching at a major City Church	Keswick Children's Service	Keswick Children's Service	Keswick Children's Service	Keswick Children's Service	Keswick Children's Service
10.30 to 12.00		Church Leaders sessions	Church Leaders sessions	Church Leaders sessions	Church Leaders sessions	
14.00-16.00	Women's Sessions	Women's Sessions	Women's Sessions	Women's Sessions	Women's Sessions	Women's Sessions
						Holy Communion Preparation
17.00-18.15	Youth Sessions	Youth Sessions	Youth Sessions	Youth Sessions	Youth Sessions	Youth Sessions
19.00 to 21.00	Opening of the Keswick Convention	Main Service	Main Service	Main Service	Main Service	Closing Service Holy Communion

and Gloria Chingota worked hard to sustain and support the work of women and children and they also organized the catering services for church leaders (during their mid-morning forum) and at the youth meetings at 5.00 pm.⁶⁸

The Keswick Convention Committee in 1967 creatively found ways of publicizing the Convention on National Radio and of infiltrating other relevant religious programmes on Malawi Broadcasting Corporation

⁶⁸ Int. Hilda Luwani, 2000.

such as '*Zochitika m'mipingo*' [Church Diary Programme] and the Sunday morning worship programme. This was perhaps the most effective publicity stint on the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation which at that time had no competition with other radio stations in the country.

The rapport between the only Radio Broadcasting Station of the nation and the Blantyre Keswick Convention Committee was so good that the religious programme producer of the station would remind the committee about the spaces he had for the publicity of the Convention programmes. Besides that, the Keswick Convention was privileged to have a very important radio personality, Joyce Ng'oma, on one of its subcommittees. The Blantyre Keswick Convention had good public relations with the media and para-church organizations and this worked superbly as a formidable publicity outfit. The duly paid for radio adverts combined with the profile of the people who spoke for the Convention, heightened expectancy and interest from the public, including non-religious casual listeners. This perhaps explains why Keswick Convention was the only religious gathering patronized even by those in the category of non-regular church goers.⁶⁹

The organizing committee arranged that one of the major churches of the city like St Michael's and all Angels or St Columba CCAP or St Paul Anglican Cathedral would host the main speaker of the convention in one of their morning worship services as their guest preacher. If there were two guest speakers then two of these churches would host these as their Sunday morning preachers. The aim of doing that was to give the people a sample and a foretaste of the evening's inaugural sermon.

The inauguration of the Convention was a big event as it was normally attended by a plethora of the city's finest church choirs. The Joint Choir then would be asked to sing the Keswick anthem which

⁶⁹ Int. Laban Banda, 2000 (Laban Banda was the longest serving General Secretary of Blantyre Keswick Convention and also acted as the organization's spokesman).

highlighted the Convention's Motto 'All one in Christ'.⁷⁰ The Keswick convention chairman would provide what appeared as the keynote address to the convention before inviting the Convention's main speaker to kick-start the convention with the first sermon of the one week's gospel preaching and teaching festival in a packed Chichiri High School Hall.⁷¹

Keswick speakers normally were 'coached' not to make an altar call at the end of their preaching as was the practice with some visiting Evangelists because of the multi-denominational sensitivities.⁷² To avert the controversy the counselling teams were asked to help inquirers who were asked to remain in the hall as others marched out. This approach however had lots of loopholes as some people who were earlier convicted by the preaching found it embarrassing to stay behind in the hall while their friends were going home.

The Keswick Convention week was a good time for the Evangelical Association to showcase what some of its members were doing. Thus the foyer of the Chichiri Secondary School Hall had stalls for the Bible Society where Bibles were being sold, and CLAIM, Scripture Union, SCOM had stalls as well. The Good News Bookroom had its stalls in the foyer selling bibles, Christian books, magazines and children's Christian comics.

Conspicuously absent from the Blantyre Keswick Conventions were leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Roman Catholic leadership; however, quite a good number of Catholics and Adventists attended Blantyre Keswick Conventions each year. Every Keswick Convention apparently witnessed a clear buildup of a steadily growing

⁷⁰ The Joint Choir was a combination of the best choirs in the City such as Scripture Union Choir, Brothers and Sisters, Christ the King Anglican Church Choir and a few other smaller choirs arranged by the assistance and guidance of the counsel of the officials of the Blantyre Keswick Organizing Committee.

⁷¹ Int. Laban Banda, July, 2001.

⁷² Some churches even within the EAM membership had different positions on the question of permitting altar calls during these meetings.

band of people that claimed having experienced spiritual regeneration.⁷³

The combined efforts of New Life for All's open air preaching, personal ministries of house to house visitation of Shadrack Wame and Andrew Gabriel's powerful healing ministry and the mostly young and zealous group of people he built around him were like the dynamics that carried the Born Again torch between one Keswick Convention gospel festival and the next.⁷⁴

The Coming on the Scene of Wame and Gabriel in 1968

The year 1968 was particularly interesting. It marked two years of Malawi's republican status and two years of Kamuzu Banda as president of the Republic and marked a time when he was, from a political perspective, effectively and un-disputably in control after quelling all discordant and dissident voices on the political landscape. But this marks a dark spot on the conscience of the organized church as it found itself lured into alignment and mandatory conformity to the ruler's whims at a time when the unleashing of his furious onslaught on the Jehovah's Witnesses was beginning to unfold.⁷⁵

It is at this time that it seemed providential that God, through the spiritual awakening, was raising the 'weak' to represent the laity to lead the 'strong,' represented by the recognized leaders of the church, in evangelistic preaching of the gospel.⁷⁶ It was about the same year that witnessed the conversion of State House labourer Shadrack

⁷³ Int. Laban Banda, July, 2001.

⁷⁴ Int. Enoch Phiri who got involved with all the three groups and the leaders who led these groups, 2000.

⁷⁵ John Lloyd Lwanda, *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi. A Study in Promise, Power and Legacy*, Zomba: Kachere, 2009.

⁷⁶ Rev Bomba confessed in one of the meetings at Gospel For All "that we (the church leaders) kept this Gospel for too long to ourselves and now God is releasing anyone who is willing and obedient to preach it out to the ends of the world. Now we see you, the laity, taking the lead in this area."

Wame in what he terms a 'momentous conversion.'⁷⁷ The same year Andrew Gabriel, who worked as a tailor at a shop belonging to one of the Asians in Limbe, claimed to have undergone an experience like that of Paul on the 'Damascus Road.' These two seemingly semi-literate men, both of them Presbyterians, underwent two different spiritual mentorships: Gabriel under Cydreck Mkunga and Wame under the team led by Jack Selfridge.⁷⁸

The one common thing between them was that their lives and particularly their testimonies of conversion began to touch people right from the beginning, and between them they commanded a huge Born Again influence in the townships more than any one person or group in the early seventies. Gabriel, right at the beginning, lost all the zeal for his tailoring profession, preferring to spend longer time at the feet of Rev Mkunga than to be on the *khonde* of an Asian's shop as a tailor. He got a reputation as the regular disciple of Mkunga.

Andrew Gabriel exhibited an insatiable desire to learn more about the Bible.⁷⁹ He also became one of the most trusted young members of the St Columba CCAP until two years later when he broke ranks with the church starting his own Born Again Evangelistic Association which started with a fairly good number of Christian influential people in the southern townships of Blantyre, among whom was the Chiwomboto family.⁸⁰ This family offered their house as the initial centre for the fellowship and the ministry of the young fiery Gabriel who at the time communicated special dreams and revelations from God and angels

⁷⁷ Int. Shadrach Wame, 2000.

⁷⁸ Int. William Nanchinga, 2001.

⁷⁹ Int. Willie Musopole, 2001.

⁸⁰ The Chiwomboto family was a well known Born Again Christian family during the early days when the Born Again message was just starting to be preached in Blantyre, and Andrew Gabriel's conversion seemed to have added more inspiration to their connection with their already existent zeal and Pentecostal charisma.

and exercised a very powerful healing and signs ministry as his meteoric rise and fame impacted on Blantyre.⁸¹

Meanwhile Shadrack Wame attached himself to the group that apparently had the teaching and influence of Jack Selfridge. When New Life for All was launched the following year Wame was closely attached to the NLFA team, which had two missionaries as its teaching pillars, John Terry⁸² and Robert Barr⁸³ who played the role of teachers and mentors to a great number of Born Again people who relied on New Life for All for their initial counsel and spiritual growth.

Comparing the Two

Unlike Gabriel, Wame did not quit his job. He still worked as Kamuzu's back yard labourer tending his flowers and plants.⁸⁴ New Life for All quickly recognized his abilities, particularly his fiery oratorical capacities. New Life for All noted that his testimony resonated with their campaign calling the church to wake up from nominal Christianity. Unlike Gabriel, Wame never quit his Presbyterian faith and maintained his membership at the Police Prayer House and later at Zomba CCAP when he was transferred to work at Zomba State House. Unlike his colleague Gabriel, Wame never started a fellowship or church but was available to all fellowships and all denominations in the City and beyond. And while Andrew Gabriel established a following who called him 'Aphunzitsi' or 'Mneneri', Wame resisted titles of any

⁸¹ Quoted from Enoch Phiri's story about his personal experiences as a 'disciple' of Andrew Gabriel – narrated in 1990.

⁸² He was a missionary of the Zambezi Industrial Mission.

⁸³ Robert Barr joined the South Africa General Mission which was based on the slightly cooler side of Nsanje in the mountains of Chididi where the mission was based; later in his life he stayed at Likhubula in the City of Blantyre.

⁸⁴ He personally confided with the author on how meticulously he did his job, eventually winning the hearts of his immediate supervisors but beyond that he won the attention of Mama Cecilia Kadzamira, Kamuzu's paramount confidante.

kind⁸⁵ and desisted from having a following.⁸⁶ However, both men exercised healing, exorcism, and claimed having regular celestial visions and dreams. Wame, however, claimed having many if not more instances of having encounters with angels in his real life experience throughout his ministry in the seventies and eighties.⁸⁷

The Opening of the Doors of New Life for All in Blantyre

New Life for All was launched in style at the former Kwacha National Cultural Centre opposite Freedom Park in the third week of August in 1969. The launching was preceded by two tier negotiations, the one between NLFA Nigeria represented by Rev Belamy and Pastor Yakubu Yako and representatives of the Association. When that negotiation was concluded the second level of negotiations was between the secretariat of the Evangelical Association and individual member churches to get an understanding on how each church would be promoting and supporting the NLFA programme. When that was also concluded, the Association prepared for the launching of this programme in Blantyre knowing that foreign and local logistics for the running of the programme were all in place.⁸⁸

From the initial negotiations with the Nigerian NLFA to launching it in Malawi it took eight fruitful months of negotiation and planning. During this time the Association completed the work of translating the NLFA material and leaflets from English into Chichewa, had the copies sent to Nigeria and had them printed there and sent to Malawi in a big consignment comprising several cartons. Later these copies were

⁸⁵ Although some radio announcers have addressed him as 'Abusa a Wame' or 'Alaliki a Wame'.

⁸⁶ There were some who started copying his white court regalia when preaching, others copied even his accent and manner and even his gestures in preaching, but when asked whether this was his following he was quick to dissociate himself from such an idea.

⁸⁷ Ernst Wendland, *Preaching that Grabs the Heart*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, p. 239.

⁸⁸ Jack Selfridge, *Jack of all Trades Mastered by One*, p. 67.

printed by the Association locally in Malawi, by Van Wyk Press at Nkhoma.

New Life for All was introduced to the member churches as the official evangelistic facility or tool of the Evangelical Association of Malawi at its launching. The Association revealed that NLFA was for the maximum involvement of the laity in evangelism in all member churches. It was emphasized that New Life for All was not a competitor of any church and that it was not meant to operate independently. It was declared that NLFA was designated to operate as a service arm of the churches within the Evangelical Association of Malawi.⁸⁹

Following the launching each member church received several cartons of literature which comprised a leaflet showing maturing green maize representing new life.⁹⁰ The story carries a picture of a hand from the clouds giving life to man in creation. Then the second feature shows a man rejecting God in sin and the third picture depicts Christ dying on the cross representing God giving life all over again and the fourth picture carries a big question mark: have you received the new life? Then there was a short note with clear and simple instructions on what one needs to do to receive new life.⁹¹

Jack Selfridge, who had been appointed the Association's chair on Evangelism from 1965 till 1969 was now appointed to lead this new Evangelism initiative - New Life for All Malawi - as its first General Secretary. The challenge of making the new organization rise from the ground was not easy as he narrates of many days he

⁸⁹ Willie Musopole recalled all this in my interview with him in Mzuzu, 2002.

⁹⁰ Rev Dr. Jele represented Livingstonia Synod at the launch of New Life for All in Blantyre in 1969. Dr. Jele utilized the NLFA concept for evangelism in the congregations he pastored and became a mentor to other leaders in his synod and became a great encourager of NLFA teams particularly in Blantyre during his regular but brief visits to the City. For his life story see: Kelly Bwalya, "The Life of Dr. Wyson Moses Kauzobafa Jele. Missionary to Zambia," BTh, University of Livingstonia, 2008 and, Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, 2017.

⁹¹ The initial NLFA handbooks and leaflets for use in evangelistic outreaches were displayed and methods were explained to the forum.

was on the road trying to encourage churches to take up the seriousness of taking the gospel out of the four walls of the church to the street. The churches appreciated the thought of having an aggressive evangelistic programme but seemed lethargic and timid to practically apply it; so, for nearly two years the gospel was not taken out on the city streets, on the paths to village 'mphalas and bwalos and small towns. There was some air of frustration at the NLFA secretariat and questions being asked were: "Is New Life for All going to be another failed programme, a mere mirage in the arid spiritual wilderness of Malawi or another evangelical white elephant?"⁹²

At the end of the year 1970 Selfridge decided to take a handful of 'his NLFA disciples' to the Blantyre Market near where Moti's Market Shop stood and staged an open air meeting and shared the Gospel according to the leaflet, and when the altar call was made, many people responded including a watch repairer Luka (who lived in Zingwangwa) who walked forward and gave his life to Christ and this point marked his involvement with New Life for All.⁹³

After Blantyre Market the team targeted another crowded place and this was Limbe Market. Like Blantyre Market the team realized that many sought the new life outlined from the leaflet. From Limbe market the team targeted yet another crowded place and this was Ndirande Market at Chinseu. At this place the gospel touched Mathemba Kachipande, a nephew of a rich man Kang'ona, but one who chose to live a dangerous lifestyle as a gangster in Ndirande. His conversion affected some of his colleagues in the gang and later he got his wife converted to his new found faith.⁹⁴

The outcome of the City outreaches which started in earnest in April 1971 seemed to rhyme the New Testament record in Acts in that each outing brought in added numbers to the New Life for All band of Born

⁹² Jack Selfridge, *Jack of all Trades Mastered by One*, p. 69.

⁹³ Int. W. Luka, 2001.

⁹⁴ Mathemba Kachipande later became one of the prolific preachers in Blantyre, particularly in Ndirande where he became the leader of the Born Again Fellowship there.

Agains. The burden of nurturing these people at the New Life for All office on Livingstone Road grew immensely so that the secretariat decided to have a person to help in the counselling of the people on a full time basis.⁹⁵

Dyson Chitekwe was enlisted for this job because of his zeal for the work of the Lord.⁹⁶ His job was to oversee the counselling ministry as well as manage all non-executive responsibilities of the New Life for All office such as manning the small Christian bookshop within the office and manage distribution of free evangelistic tracts from Scripture Gift Mission to teams that were going out to preaching points in the city.

Conclusion

The question some asked was whether New Life for All was reneging on its *modus operandi* as presented by the Executive Committee of the Evangelical Association of Malawi. The answer obviously was the contrary to such expectation. New Life for All was simply showing the church how the work needed to be carried out. Churches were free to join in what New Life for All had started doing in the City or be indifferent.

The laity liked this work and most of them disdained New Life for All talk within the church because it came with a lot of red tape and there was still skepticism of what the laity would do on their own. At the New Life for All office the teaching was straightforward and the teams were itching to send anyone in the front line of witnessing and preaching without taking recourse to quiz someone of their capabilities and education.

It is possible when the evangelistic arm of the churches frees itself from the lethargic state and goes it alone almost as an independent

⁹⁵ Chitekwe reported that almost every lunch hour and evenings from that time on the vast office building of New Life for All was filled with people seeking counselling or special prayer.

⁹⁶ Dyson Chitekwe converted earlier under the ministry of Jack Selfridge. He was initially from Nyasa Mission but later joined Zambezi Evangelical Church and rose to be its General Secretary and also taught at EBCOM.

evangelistic organization that flickers of an Awakening begin to be noticed by those that were observant of developments in the City. The inner circle of these earlier missions comprised Willie Musopole, John Sisya, Dyson Chitekwe, Shadrach Wame, W.W. Nyasulu, Wilson Chisambiro, Kerston Chipeta, W. Kanjere, and Victor Zuze.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Int. Rev Kerston Chipeta, 2000.

Chapter 3: The Dynamism of the Awakening

This chapter chronicles a plethora of providential situations and developments of historic importance as the revival heightened with an ever increased momentum of evangelistic fervour both in the City and the surrounding towns from the end of 1974 onwards. Featured herewith among other developments will be the historic New Life for All solo move (because it did not happen with the full blessing of the whole membership of EAM) to go out and operate as a fully-fledged evangelistic organization on its own without recanting its earlier mandate to operate within the churches under the umbrella of EAM. This will be featured as one of the possible factors that led to the growth and maturation of the Born Again Movement in the City.¹

The chapter also narrates how the passion and demand for united prayer on the part of New Life for All and its allied groups became an absolute necessity for the thriving and sustainability of the Born Again Revival during a period when being Born Again was critiqued by some church leaders as Christian fundamentalism and some government security and party agents treated them suspiciously as a clandestine operation of Jehovah's Witnesses underground group or worse still as a crude fanatical religious clique.

This part of the story will also share compounded and adjoined accounts of the preaching and teaching and the nurturing role played by some resident missionaries like those from Zambezi Mission, Africa Evangelical Fellowship (Chididi) Mission, and other faith missionaries like Annie Duffy, Stewart Lane and Magnus Udd. The following parachurch organizations: Dorothea Mission, Scripture Union, Every Home Crusade, the Young Believers Fellowship, and Gospel Youth, the Students Christian Organization of Malawi (SCOM) played a major role

¹ The decision to go out as an evangelistic organization evangelizing independently was allegedly a violation of its mandate because NLFA was prescribed to operate with and within the member churches of the Evangelical Association of Malawi. Jack Selfridge has given it some space in his book, *Jack of All Trades Mastered by One*.

meeting the growing need for teaching and meeting a deep spiritual hunger which was evident among the people in their hundreds and perhaps in their thousands.²

The chapter will also feature ministries and individuals who were like 'rising stars' on the horizon of this Awakening or new brooms in the Blantyre household of faith; among these were Shadrach Wame, Andrew Gabriel and his Born Again Evangelistic Association (BAEA), Gift Kaunda³, Madalitso Mbewe, Willie Chaponda, Stanley Ndovie, Barbara Tippet, Mathemba Kachipande and his wife Joyce, Linley Mbete and a few others.

Like with all revivals tendencies of tilting towards error and falling into extremes in articulating and enforcing truth will be dealt with featuring the apologetics that were employed to keep the flock from error and heresy. To ably do this I will expound some of the teachings and how the remedial processes ensued. The historical narration crowns this chapter with the ultimate impact which is explaining how the Born Again Awakening in Blantyre and surrounding areas became a major phenomenon impacting both the mainline and the smaller churches.⁴

This is a narrative on a movement which was not given much chance of continuity or sustainability but that blossomed and thrived largely

² Wherever someone stopped to share the gospel people were prepared to listen regardless where it was being shared and apart from a few church leaders, most of the people who offered lessons in discipleship and Christian nurture were paradoxically sourced outside the established churches. Perhaps this indicates just how ill-prepared and indifferent the mainline churches were to deal with the spiritual developments happening around them.

³ Gift Kaunda was initially from Mzuzu but was converted under mysterious visionary circumstances while working as a civil servant in Zomba. He claimed that the commission he got from this vision led him to immediately resign his civil servant position and to go into ministry right away—a ministry which became popular among young people and the elite in Blantyre.

⁴ The Focused Group Discussions and observations of the development.

outside the doors of most church denominations who downgraded the Born Again talk as some kind of religious fanaticism for 'confused guys'. Still it ended up impacting both mainline and smaller churches positively for the edification of their spirituality and religiosity. But where the resistance against the Born Again Movement was upheld new emerging ministries and organizations became the unavoidable scenario.

The Historic Solo Move of New Life for All

After the 20th October 1972 meeting, which marked the last meeting the New Life for All leadership held with churches on the issue of getting NLFA programmes to the public, NLFA, opposed to the suggestions of gradual introduction of the evangelistic programmes, chose to brashly come into the open casting aside the all too common fear of being mistaken for Jehovah's Witnesses reacting against the church's lethargic state and the unnecessary delay of the programme.⁵

This move whirled NLFA into an aggressive evangelistic mode where the passion was to get the Gospel to where the people are countering the church bell syndrome which called the people to come to where the gospel is. This was accomplished through open air meetings as earlier alluded to in the following areas: First Blantyre, Limbe and Ndirande Markets and later Lunzu, South Lunzu, Msika Wanjala and Soche Markets, then Mbayani, Manase, Chilobwe taverns and Manyowe, Chilomoni and Bangwe townships. This aggressive mode of encountering people with the gospel brought about quite a stir in the Blantyre community as this seemed strange for groups of smart looking people going about preaching as they were doing.⁶ The

⁵ The fear was so intense that later New Life for All printed identity cards to ease such fear and trepidation of the possibility of being apprehended on mistaken identity. The other point NLFA emphasized was that all team members carry their MCP membership cards all the time when they were in the field preaching.

⁶ Open air meetings normally were the preserve of the heavily bearded apostolic preachers who were sometimes deemed as the ragtag of society and people in general terms tended not to take them seriously.

marked difference between the Apostolic [*Apostoli*] open air preaching and NLFA's open air preaching was that NLFA's open air preaching was systematic and strategic for they preached to have people make a decision for Christ and receive counselling and an evangelistic tract. On the other hand the Apostolic [apostolic] churches' open air preaching was long and they never made an altar call. Their preaching was good but it never directed the people to make a choice between Christ and their world.

The NLFA open air meetings entrenched in the people a deep passion and reverence for godly things and enacted deep evangelistic fervour that ran wild like a spark on petrol.⁷ This is quite evident with the way the once latent fearful, shy Born Again people rose up to the occasion and became Blantyre's dynamic force for the message of regeneration which was well received by hearts for the Gospel. The Born Again phenomenon and influence grew to proportions where it could not be denied, neglected or pushed aside as insignificant religious talk in the Blantyre community. Both the serious church going crowd and even those characterized as the nominal, casual and non-religious type frequently talked and joked about the multiplying numbers of Born Agains, often ridiculing them as stalkers who always want to know whether you are a person that is saved or not, saved from what! And so they would role in laughter over a bottle of beer in the city's pubs and taverns.⁸

One thing was clear: the Born Again message of salvation was reaching its intended target by 1978. Becoming the top agenda in pub talk meant it had made the rounds enough to convict even the non-religious idle talker. The Born Again message, though derided, was by all means being preached. St Paul stated in his epistle to the

⁷ Int. Victor Zuze, 2002.

⁸ Mlenga testified in 1979 that being Born Again was a hugely popular subject among fellow alcohol and winebibbers in the pubs and drinking joints in the City who often in utter derision laughed at Born Again exorcism of Satan saying why should a Born Again 'pretty bird' say 'get behind me Satan', doesn't she know that's where Satan wants to hibernate - drawing rolls of laughter from the patrons.

Philippians that regardless of the motivation behind the gospel talk it still amounts to preaching it.

'It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry but others out of good will. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the Gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.'⁹

The overwhelming response which often followed the simple preaching of the salvation message tended to be accompanied by what seemingly was a unique charisma typified by deep conviction of sinners who came forward (in response to an altar call) in tearful repentance. Sometimes open air meetings were spiced with shouts of people, almost drowning the preaching, who witnessed or experienced dumbfounding miracles or wonders.¹⁰ In one such meeting two illiterate women, Mai M'mangeni and Mai Chabwera, claimed that their eyes instantly received literacy prowess enabling them to read the scriptures moments after their conversion and regeneration.¹¹

These stories and events were not an exception, rather these were common occurrences in many open air meetings in Blantyre and surrounding areas. A dramatic situation ensued at one of the open air

⁹ Philippians 1:15-18 NIV.

¹⁰ Fredrick Kasonda reported that he and other inquirers were converted in such outreaches where they experienced not only conversion but a moving spiritual and emotional touch which also included physical healing.

¹¹ Mai M'mangeni and Mai Chabwera were spiritually nurtured by Cecil Chikafa and his wife who testified to the veracity of the miracle that happened to both women who immediately began to read the scriptures without any teaching aids. Mai Mmangeni later became a very reliable member of the women fellowship group which was under the leadership of Catherine Kumchulesi while Mai Chabwera became a long lasting member of Nkolokosa prayer group. Mai Mmangeni returned to her home district of Ntcheu.

meetings held near Bangwe Market when a *chamba* [marijuana] smoking man convicted by the preaching interrupted the preaching and surrendered all his stuff openly, taking no regard of what law enforcement people would do. When the message was over not only did the team deal with the surrendered *chamba* but also with surrendered *zithumwa* [charms] and specially charmed beads worn by women, vendors' juju and other related items.¹² At another meeting a thief [now former thief] brought his relatively new and expensive Rotary Avenger 17 jewels wrist watch to the preachers and in a rather dramatic way, took it off his wrist and put it down and crushed it against a stone and openly confessed to them that he did not deserve to have it because he bought it with stolen money, and he told his counsellors that he did not need it any more.¹³

Several times young women came forward in tears to confess their immoral practices. When asked why they were caught in this vice most responded that they were in it because they wanted to make a living [because of urban economic difficulties] and one, who identified herself as Linley from Lunzu, asked if one of the Born Agains had a job so she could not return to her risky trade. A brief synopsis showed that a fraction of such girls or women gradually returned back to the dangerous trade because there was no rehabilitation system for such in place, however, others either returned to their homes in the rural areas or found grace by getting married to good people.¹⁴

Revivals are never without accounts of God's movements or they would not warrant the term spiritual awakenings. Revival is that

¹² Mathemba Kachipande led the team that dealt with and counselled people that presented this stuff. He connected well with them having come from a market vending background and being a close friend of a number of market vendors in Blantyre, Ndirande, Bangwe and Msika Wanjala markets.

¹³ They personally witnessed Phiri's heart moving repentant attitude and exercise of new faith in the Gospel in 1978.

¹⁴ One among such women withdrew from this lifestyle, got married and became a prominent women guild member and choir singer in a Zambezi Evangelical Church congregation. She was still apprehensive of her past and did not want her name to appear in this bppk.

strange and sovereign work of God in which he visits his own people – restoring, reanimating and releasing them into fullness of his blessing. Such a divine intervention will issue in evangelism, though in the first instance, it is a work of God in the Church and among individual believers. The Spirit is the lifeblood of the church, the vivifying force that makes its very existence possible. Without the Spirit the church is either an empty and lifeless shell or a horrific monstrosity animated by some spirit other than the Spirit of the risen Jesus. If the Spirit of Christ genuinely animates the church, then it should be bearing fruit of that spirit.¹⁵

Lunch Hour Fellowships

The major and most conspicuous evangelistic group was New Life for All, but its presence in the townships was through its satellite groups (also called its allied groups), of course except the Andrew Gabriel led Born Again Evangelistic Association which stood on its own unaffiliated to any other organization from 1974 to 1981. Towards the end of 1974 the team of Born Again Christians began to multiply and open air meetings could be held concurrently at Blantyre Market as well as on the City Street Corner towards Wenela Bus stage near where Chibuku beer used to be sold and that now is turned into a place where minibuses park. The Born Agains targeted this venue because they had the drunkards in mind and wanted them to hear the Gospel and give them an opportunity to respond.¹⁶

The Good News Bookroom Fellowship was an extension of the open air ministry at Wenela. The bookroom served as a discipleship spot for those that converted under the impact of open air preaching. The Good News Bookroom opened its doors to the fellowship in mid-

¹⁵ Steven Olford, "Visit us Afresh" in *Herald of His Coming*, Terminal Issue, Los Angeles, January 1984.

¹⁶ It was reported that when Dyson Chitekwe was just saved he ran amok in his righteous anger and kicked about the Chibuku packets of beer which started a huge eruption of pandemonium until peace was restored by those that had cool heads.

1975.¹⁷ These were the rented premises of Annie Duffy, an Irish faith missionary who had in her own right faithfully carried out personal evangelism for many years at Wenela Bus Stage; and twice a week she would walk close to ten miles one way to Nkhumbwe and another ten miles in return.¹⁸ Nkhumbwe was the place where returning migrant workers from South Africa camped before they received their dues on their way home. She challenged the fellowship which was meeting in her premises to consider preaching the gospel to these returning Malawian migrant workers who came in their hundreds almost biweekly each month.¹⁹

The spacious Livingstone Road building in Blantyre offered shelter for all discipleship ministries of New Life for All and other ministry activities centered around Blantyre proper such as Come to Jesus Choir, Gospel For All Youth (then known as Gospel Youth), the Blantyre Joint Choir and a host of other Christian groups. As the revival grew, the Blantyre NLFA office became an intensified 'beehive' of spiritual activities literally every day of the week including afternoons on Sundays.

The Born again movement in Limbe was sheltered in the Malawi Railways Training Center. Most of the people that met there were

¹⁷ She turned this living room into a small bookshop which she called Good News Bookshop that would be packed to capacity with more than 50 people in a room designed to take no more than 20 people, as a result others would be standing outside the building or crouch on the porch in order to hear sermons or scriptural sessions.

¹⁸ Later she was joined by a young lady who stayed with her for a couple of years, and then a Malawian young man, Justin Falinya devoted his time to helping this old lady in her ministry. Annie Duffy later recommended this young man to go to Northern Ireland for pastoral training and he now serves as a pastor in his own church.

¹⁹ Annie Duffy consistently remained faithful to her passion for 'one on one' personal evangelism; she consistently disseminated the gospel using this method until her old age and eventual death in 1983 in Blantyre. Her funeral was attended by people of all walks of life because of her influence in the gospel preaching on many people in Malawi.

those that had converted from the open air preaching in Limbe and those that were in Limbe because they were working for Admarc, John Abegg Ltd, Grain Milling Company, the Malawi Railways itself, Manica Ltd, Agason Motors, Malawi Pharmacies and Press Steel and Wire Ltd. There were also a small number of people who worked for individual Asians in their shops.²⁰ The prominent leaders for this NLFA fellowship were Emmanuel Chinkwita, Mary Ntaba, and Kamzati Chombo.

While the people in Blantyre, Wenela and Limbe had lunch hour prayers and preaching and teaching services, it seemed Ginnery Corner Born Agains had no shelter over the lunch hour apart from meeting near the gate to the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital for an open air meeting, until the likes of Wilson Chisambiro and Mataya identified the Red Cross Hall as a possible place of meeting for the 'Born Agains' towards the end of 1975. Apart from the influential Wilson Chisambiro others that played a role in building the fellowship at this place were Jairus Gelevulo, William Mvula and Mrs E. Phiri, and Mathemba Kachipande. The fellowship regularly enjoyed the preaching of Stephen Lungu, Shadrack Wame, Stephen Fula, C. Kango, and the three Chisambiro, William, Freeman and Kachipande who were resident at the fellowship.

Attempts to Crack down on the Born Again Movement

As 1975 was coming to an end there were four major fellowships that were running in the City and this was in addition to the NLFA regular open air meetings that continued in major public places until 1977. After this year there was a kind of unease on the part of political leaders who suspected that the spiritual resurgence in the City and surrounding areas was or seemed to be a Jehovah's Witness undercover work operating as Born Agains.

What followed was a crude and uncoordinated investigation of the party vigilantes and the Police. The vigilantes appeared to be bent at

²⁰ Following M.J. Banda's conversion as a Born Again in 1973, Banda utilized his influence as a high ranking officer in the Malawi Railways to secure a room for his fellow Born Agains.

foiling activities of the Born Again Movement while the Police was looking for solid and objective evidence that would support the emerging allegations that 'Born Agains' were indeed Jehovah's Witnesses in a kind of different garb. Paradoxically, most local area party chairmen in the townships [most of whom were mature and elderly] liked the 'Born Agains' for their sober habits, generally good behaviour and friendliness in the neighbourhoods. The Born Agains were noted for their kindness, were helpful and always respectful of authority in the townships. However, a good number of youth leaguers picked on the Born Agains not because they really suspected them to be Jehovah's Witnesses but because they considered their message as unacceptable and awfully against their immoral lifestyles.²¹

The Secret Police apprehended and interrogated a handful of Born Agains at different times between the seventies and eighties but almost all interrogations never materialized with concrete or credible evidence. However, some 'Born Agains' were detained and jailed. Among them were Steven Galatiya²² and Andrew Gabriel, both of whom were jailed or detained for national security purposes. All that were interrogated spoke of being subjected to long hours of interrogations. In all these cases the interrogations were not accompanied by physical torture as would have been expected if the cases had been exclusively political in nature.²³

²¹ Int. Wilson Chisambiro, 2002.

²² Galatiya says that the categorization and interpretation of his evangelistic message mistakenly taken out of context to mean that when he said 'God has no partiality or respect of persons, if you are a sinner you will be thrown in hell regardless of your position in society 'kaya ndiwe bwana wamkuru or not [whether you are the big boss or not]' the secret agents interpreted that as an insinuation of President Banda. He was asked to recant his words if he wanted freedom, but he refused insisting that he had preached the truth which by no means he was prepared to recant and so they arrested him and detained him for almost one year.

²³ Personal interviews with the following: Wame, Kango, Chisambiro, Chitekwe and Nkhwimba among others who were apprehended and

Some of the wild stories that circulated and fed 'grapevine' were that Born Agains allegedly belonged to the 'Zoipa chitani mbiri siigonera' cult [a kind of cult that worships at night for immoral ritual sex and cleansing]. The Born-Agains organize overnight prayers with the ploy to have illicit immoral actions. A typical overnight prayer will have one Born Again holding the lamp in his hand or sits where the electric switch is and so when worship is at its peak the leader or captain of the group motions then the light/bulbs gets switched off and then in pitch darkness, Born Agains go into a frenzy [it's free for all] of sexual stuff till the break of day when they resume normal worship. Such were the alleged false charges of adultery and fornication against the 'Born Agains'.²⁴

Surprisingly, some pastors and elders who found themselves at odds with the Born Again charisma precipitated the unwarranted criticisms by the so called church pastors and elders who apparently were insecure with the charisma of Born Agains in their denominations.

Prayer Groups Devolve into Evangelistic Fellowships

The Prayer groups in the townships were created with the sole purpose of offering a prayer backing to the work of New Life for All in Blantyre, but these prayer groups spanned beyond this purpose to be fully-fledged ministries because they catered for the spiritual need of many who were not catered for by the lunch hour fellowships in the City. These were the school teachers, the vendors in the markets or those in the vocations of watch repairing and shoe repairing and others who were jobless in the townships and school leavers and a good number of people who worked in menial jobs for Asians and had no privilege of being released to attend a Christian lunch hour fellowship.

As fully-fledged fellowships with teachers and counsellors of their own the prayer groups served a different role which was difficult for NLFA

interrogated or sought after by Special Branch [secret undercover police agents] at different times. Int. between 2000 and 2003.

²⁴ Int. Wilson Chisambiro, 2002.

to fulfill and this was how to maximize the weekend with the witness of the Gospel in the townships. Each prayer group took it upon itself as its cause and passion to saturate their neighbourhood with the gospel during the weekends. The group leading the way in this kind of witness was the Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda prayer group which was head and shoulders above the others. The leadership of Wilson Chisambiro Mataya and Enoch Phiri, Mai Phiri and Jairus Gelevulo was great and solid.

By June 1976 the Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer Group began to operate as the 'mother' fellowship of other fellowship groups in the City. Small prayer groups in other townships would trek from Ndirande, Chilomoni and Bangwe to attend and appreciate how Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda managed their fellowship and articulated their Born Again message.

Their worship was excellent. The soul moving singing of the choruses and clapping of hands backed by a lineup of several skilled drummers [each skillfully beating their drum in wonderful coordination] coupled by the rare South African made tambourines and traditional *maseche* [pebbles put in a can] all that combined with vibes of two or more accordions created a mesmerizing sound that captured even the interest of the casual bystander. The dancing was vigorous to the chagrin of the conservative traditionalists in the CCAP, some evangelical churches and SDA. The Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer Group was lively presenting the same old gospel with special taste, freshness and edification. For many this was a rather strange way and form of gospel presentation and they marveled at the sheer joy and exuberance exhibited by these Born Agains. While some sneered, a good number of people knew the Born Agains had something which they did not possess in the many years of church denominational life. The Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer Group in a way set up a kind of precedent of township-fellowship style. Most fellowships in the City replicated almost all that Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer group did or was doing.²⁵

²⁵ Narration by Jairus Gelevulo from his recollection of the Awakening, 2002.

In some cases the Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer group moved and set up camp in a different township to help the struggling fellowship in that township stand on its feet. Among such fellowships that were assisted in this way were the Ndirande, Bangwe, Naotcha, Mpingwe, Chileka and Chilomoni Fellowships.²⁶ Because of this kind of support among fellowships the Born Again Movement grew in leaps and bounds in the townships.²⁷ Fellowships in the townships excited the crowds by their singing and dancing antics and a good number of children clamoured where the fellowship meetings took place and it was these children that took the Born Again messages back home to sometimes unwilling and disinterested parents.²⁸

Something worth of mention in the devolvement of prayer groups into fellowships is that all prayer groups that had devolved into full-fledged fellowships were bound by an unwritten code of fraternity. If one prayer group was having a big outreach in their vicinity they would normally invite other prayer groups (which became Born Again fellowships) even if it meant going several miles away from their vicinity. More so this fraternity was exhibited during funerals of a Born Again member or a funeral concerning one of their family members (and these instances were not uncommon). Born Agains usually supported their Born Again brother perhaps in a more loving way than their church members.²⁹ When it was Keswick time all fellowships

²⁶ The prayer group in Chilomoni faced a lot of resistance from Zambezi Evangelical Church leadership and perhaps was also overshadowed by the charisma of the leader of the Independent Assemblies of God in Chilomoni, Pastor J.P. Chitakata. However, the likes of W.F. Chitsukwa and others championed the rise of the Born Again Movement in this township.

²⁷ H. Mvula attested that those were times when the township “rested” from thievery activities.

²⁸ Among such was Abiti Yusufu, a staunch Muslim woman who later testified that her spiritual quest started when children relayed to her what they heard at the Born Again fellowship meetings.

²⁹ This was clearly exhibited when Shadreck Wame's child died at Naperi and also when Wilson Chisambiro's child was knocked down by a car and died on

suspended their scheduled activities to support the Keswick Convention. Fellowships would commit to pray for Keswick, others would urge fellowship members in the Townships to attend the convention. Such was the discipline in all the fellowship groups in Blantyre.

The Eruption of Teaching Ministries

The Born Again revivalism prompted the rise in numbers of lay preachers but along with it came a genuine concern for orthodoxy in the preaching and teaching of the Gospel.³⁰ Some people like Wame, despite apparent literacy limitations, claimed being divinely taught in the scriptures.³¹ A good number of these preachers went into the ministry without adequate training as such some of the preaching left much to be desired.

These preachers directed their preaching against anything that seemed to point to modernism. They castigated any form of smartness or good looks. They were opposed to women's fashionable clothes, applying of perfume or powder, wearing lipstick, jewelry, plaiting of the hair, and any form of hair care for women. The men equally were not expected to overdress [quite opposite to the present scenario where some pastors have tipped over to the other extreme celebrity type of dressing]. Putting on shoes with a metal lining, dressing in blue or black jeans and putting on a shiny metal chain of the wrist watch was considered worldly. If a man put on a necklace it was considered as an affront, it was like a woman who put on a short dress which

the spot on his way home from Zingwangwa Primary School. In both cases multitudes of Born Agains around town and from nearby towns made their way there to support their friends in a most profound fraternity.

³⁰ Some EAM members raised their concerns with the content of the preaching and teaching of the gospel to the extent that they established a regulation that New Life for All preachers and teachers have a letter of identification to curb erratic teaching in *milaga* and surrounding areas of Blantyre.

³¹ Ernst Wendland, *Preaching that Grabs the Heart*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, p. 241.

barely showed the knees or the neckline; such were considered as uncouth and hell-bound.

Andrew Gabriel promoted shabby looks like encouraging members not to take a bath while fasting as a sign of true prophetic disposition and devotion.³² Immediately after the time span of these erratic teachings came another serious erratic teaching: And this one was the anti-Trinitarian heresy of the Bible Believers Fellowship led by the American missionary Cronje. Much of their literature was from the organization of America's William Marion Branham that came to Malawi via South Africa through Friends in Christ Ministry.³³ They taught that those that were baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit needed to be re-baptized because they were not baptized properly. Their teaching required that everyone be baptized "in the name of Jesus." They also claimed that there was no such thing as the personal Father or personal Holy Spirit, Jesus was the God and the two were mere offices.³⁴

Regardless of the quality of the preaching and amount of error in the preaching or teaching, it seemed people's hearts were conditioned to unequivocally respond affirmatively to anything that named God or Jesus in it. This was both an opportunity as well as a situation that spelled danger particularly for the many that were young in ministry. The EAM noted the gravity of this problem, particularly Willie Musopole was hypersensitive to the problem and he immediately wanted to have Born Agains undergo some form of theological training to save them from becoming victims of erratic teachings and heresy.

³² Enoch Phiri was swept into Andrew Gabriel's teaching, but when he knew the truth he came out of this heresy and preached against it.

³³ Views taken from an encounter with a Mr. Jacobs of Friends of Christ Ministry who taught this teaching at a NLFA meeting in 1983 at Zomba Community Centre. Not long after the controversial meeting a crisis ensued at Zomba Theological College where management suspended and later expelled Dodge Katimba and a few others for embracing this teaching.

³⁴ For a full study of the Bible Believers in their various groupings see: Richard Gadama, "The Bible Believers in Malawi: History, Teachings and Practices (1977-2011)", MA, Mzuzu University, 2012.

Musopole quickly identified the Deeper Christian Life Ministry through the Ghanaian prolific woman preacher Florence Yeboah.³⁵ When this connection was made, EAM went into partnership with Deeper Life Ministry led by William Kumuyi. Kumuyi approved to let into his International Bible Training Center located in Gbagada in the City of Lagos 13 aspiring Malawian Bible students among whom were three young ladies. The agreement reached was that these would be trained at the expense of his ministry. This covered air fares, tuition and other related costs because he understood EAM's dire need for apologetics and good gospel teachers for Malawi.³⁶

The Role Teaching Ministries Played

Regardless of the inroads of heretic and wrong teaching from some quarters the available teaching ministries of Scripture Union, Dorothea Mission, Every Home Crusade, the Blantyre Keswick and of course individuals like Annie Duffy, Robert Barr,³⁷ Mrs Sutcliffe,³⁸ John Terry,³⁹

³⁵ Florence Yeboah was a prominent Gospel state woman on the African Continent and one of the officials of the Pan African Leadership Assembly (PACLA) and a speaker at their forums. Her earlier ministry was connected with Deeper Christian Life Ministry in Lagos, Nigeria before she went on the grander continental stage with her ministry. It was through PACLA that Musopole knew her and invited her several times to preach at the Keswick Convention meetings particularly to Women Ministries in Malawi.

³⁶ Int. Willie Musopole, 2002.

³⁷ Robert Barr was living at Chididi Mission in Nsanje but due to ill health came to Blantyre where the weather was fairer on him and his presence in the City was greatly needed for that purpose. He proved to be an ardent and zealous teacher despite his advanced age.

³⁸ Wife of an expatriate man whose area of responsibility and expertise was in the transport sector of the Malawi Government. She devoted her time to ministry and was almost as busy as full time missionaries.

³⁹ John Terry took classes on the four Gospels and wanted Born Agains to know and get acquainted with Jesus of Nazareth, the core of their faith and calling. He was such a good teacher who made his class feel the intensity of the teachings and message of the four Evangelists - St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke and St John.

Shadrack Wame,⁴⁰ Augustine Musopole⁴¹ and others providentially played a very important role in staving off some of the worst errors that could have wiped out much of the good work that had occurred during this special spiritual visitation. Bible teachers like the elderly Bob Barr helped the fellowships particularly those that congregated at the NLFA center in Blantyre and the Good News Book Room at Wenela. These ministries and individuals considerably mitigated the great need which arose because of an upsurge of converts that needed spiritual nurturing during the Awakening.

The Role of Scripture Union

Scripture Union as earlier alluded set up shop in Blantyre in 1969 concurrently with New Life for All. The major role SU played was serving the Gospel to the elite of Blantyre City. Places which had little of New Life for All had more of Scripture Union. Scripture Union invaded such places as St Andrews High School and the University of Malawi [which was at Chichiri High School premises for a good number of years before it moved to Zomba]. It had some influence among the expatriate community of the likes of Forbes who was working for Graham Carr and Company, Graham Carr himself, Mathematics Professor Martyn Cundy and a number of expatriate teachers at

⁴⁰ Shadrach Wame similarly had no formal education, but he claimed that every night he was assigned a divine being, possibly an angel, who taught him what sound doctrine was and to a certain measure Wame surprised some seminary educated people in Blantyre and Zomba with his understanding of important theological issues. He is included here because he blended well with Born Agains and helped very much in screening out some of the wrong teachings that were espoused by some Born Again preachers, allegedly among them Andrew Gabriel.

⁴¹ Augustine Musopole was not directly associated with the Blantyre Born Again Awakening, but his responsibilities in SCOM brought him into constant connection and contact with the Blantyre congregation of Born Agains. Although he was generally considered elitist, Born Agains nevertheless gained from his forthright and scripturally coherent teachings.

Chichiri High School, Blantyre Secondary School (BSS) and Henry Henderson Institute (HHI).

Most of the Christian elite comprising graduates of Chancellor College, Mpemba School of Administration, Soche Hill College (where the University trained Secondary School teachers) and the nursing schools in the country were fully exposed to Scripture Union. When they went out into the City for jobs they automatically encountered SU Bible Study leaders. Almost all SU monthly meetings were carried out in the English language only. The dressing at these monthly meetings was neat and modern and their meetings were the only ones where people were served a snack and a bottle of soda, tea or coffee which was a very exclusive privilege. Their Bible study fellowship groups were in the exclusively middle class neighborhoods of Chitawira, Mandala Flats, Ndirande Newlines and Nyambadwe, which included such areas as St Andrews and Chirimba. Later Bible study groups were started with the elite that were stationed at Chileka Airport.⁴²

The SU monthly meetings were a special occasion in the City because this was the day young smartly dressed elite portrayed themselves. The Scripture Union Choir was a special attraction as it dished out good English spiritual songs and hymns that exuded modernity. These meetings did not have the typical Born Again euphoria and emotion one usually experienced in the Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda prayer group or the New Life for All groups. Scripture Union specifically met the needs of a very delicate and elite group of Born Agains at the time when some scoffed Born-Againism as mere spiritual or religious fanaticism. Scripture Union occupied a very special ministry, and provided a place and refuge for the middle class and the educated at this historical moment in the era of the Awakening.⁴³

Gospel Youth

As New Life for All's attention on open air meetings receded towards 1978, Gospel Youth [which was born a year earlier in 1977]

⁴² Kayange and a few others were part of this fellowship.

⁴³ Readson Galatiya's recollections of the Awakening, 2002.

consolidated its vision for open air ministry at every vintage point in the City. It operated under the motto 'Malawi for Jesus.' The ministry grew in the shadows and to a certain extent under the tutelage of New Life for All, but characteristically Gospel Youth had a wider agenda because it attracted a mixed crowd which had largely the elite of society but also those who could not exactly be counted as belonging to the elite. It was a 90% young peoples' organization and possibly the other 10% was occupied by those that were young at heart, the likes of Koffman Adamson Kachaje, Saiti Phiri,⁴⁴ P.M.N.S. Mkandawire,⁴⁵ and Leonard Unyolo.⁴⁶

The elite group of Jeffrey Thindwa, Dunstain Mwaungulu,⁴⁷ Mary Ntaba, a top Secretary at Manica Ltd, Dorothy Ngwangwa, a young school leaver,⁴⁸ Silas Kenala and also Lucy Honde,⁴⁹ Gloria Chingota,⁵⁰ John Sapulani and Golden Matiya,⁵¹ both senior auditors of reputable auditing firms in Blantyre, Irene Banda, Rosebay Phiri and Helen Moyo⁵² were founding members of Gospel Youth under the charis-

⁴⁴ Koffman Adamson Kachaje worked for Manica Company as office assistant and Saiti Phiri worked at a battery company at Ginnery Corner in Blantyre.

⁴⁵ P.M.N.S. Mkandawire was at that time holding the position of Senior Engineer of MBC.

⁴⁶ Leonard Unyolo was at the time the Registrar of the High Court.

⁴⁷ Jeffrey Thindwa and Dunstain Mwaungulu were both young LLB graduates.

⁴⁸ Dorothy Ngwangwa later became a top Air Malawi ground travel logistical officer.

⁴⁹ Silas Kenala and Lucy Honde, both fine young economists, graduated from the University of Malawi.

⁵⁰ Gloria Chingota was a senior Accountant at Press Group Ltd.

⁵¹ John Sapulani and Golden Matiya, both Senior Auditors of reputable auditing firms in Blantyre.

⁵² Irene Banda, Rosebay Phiri and Helen Moyo were registered nurse trainees at the National School of Nursing which later assumed the name of Kamuzu College of Nursing under the University of Malawi. Its headquarters was located at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre before it moved to Lilongwe.

matic and popular leadership of Eston Kakhoma,⁵³ who took the ministry to higher levels in terms of its vision and evangelistic missionary agenda (which was in all ways a grander agenda than that of New Life for All).

The younger GFA ministry did not just take to the streets and preach to people at open air meetings at the Markets but also opened new corridors for evangelistic witness to the country's premier hotels, schools and colleges in coordination with SCOM and it sent preaching missions to other parts of the country as far as Likoma Island and also initiated a social programme named MEFRIIPA and transformed the wedding Committee of Bright and Annie Kawamba to serve as a monthly social and discipleship group for Gospel for All stalwarts that ran for five years before it wound up.⁵⁴

The first Hotel outreach took place at the country's premier hotel, the Mount Soche. The initial meeting drew several hundreds which filled the Njamba Room to capacity. The patrons were a mixture of regular church goers and those who never knew the church door but came out of curiosity to see the famous Come to Jesus singing group and the Chancellor College Christian drama group which came all the way to back Gospel for All and of course to hear the recent convert to Christianity and legendary pop and rock singer Wambali Mkandawire who had already attained celebrity status. The preacher at this maiden hotel outreach was the young graduate in Law, Jeffrey Thindwa, who passionately preached the message of salvation.

⁵³ Kakhoma was at the time working as a Senior Administrative Officer of Malawi Book Service Ltd.

⁵⁴ Adamson Koffman Kachaje marvelled at the passion which caused this fellowship to thrive and progress with the rare paradox of the rich and poor unified into a single fellowship whose members cooperated very well as if they were all of the same economic class. These people helped each other wholistically in times of need and in good times. This in a way was rendered a special Christian witness to their fellow middle class families in Nyambadwe, Namiwawa and Indian quarters, the most notable venues where this fellowship regularly met.

Gospel for All intensified the open air gospel campaign meetings in the townships and started sending smaller missions out to Likoma Island and to Muslim dominated places such as Ntaja, Liwonde and Nkhotakota by the turn of 1982. The ministry also sent missions to travel by train to Shire North, Balaka and Nsanje all the way preaching on the train moving from one compartment to another. Gospel for All also opened another front for ministry through the ministry passion and ingenuity of Maundi Chombo who cleared with Ministry of Labour officials and started an outreach to the hundreds of the unemployed from the last part of 1982 towards the beginning of 1987.

Apart from having testimonies of people receiving the Gospel at the Ministry of Labour grounds, there was a strange manifestation that rather appeared as simply miraculous that those who converted to Christianity tended to be picked first and considered for jobs as compared to those that resisted the gospel. This quickly dawned on the crowd there and so the public found another reason for heeding the gospel.⁵⁵

The ministry also started a social forum which was aimed at nurturing those that were already members of the fellowship, though on the other hand it served to integrate potential members and those that were considered as friends of the ministry to ultimately become members. The forum was known by the acronym MEFRIPA.⁵⁶ The ideal MEFRIPA programme was designed to be a light and informal time spiced by interesting reports and achievements of the ministry amidst eating special food for the occasion and drinking while listening to contemporary Gospel music (what was contemporary music then were hits from Andrew Crouch and other western artists). After the main meal people were invited to a cup of tea or coffee. MEFRIPA also allowed Gospel for All to seek feedback and suggestions from those

⁵⁵ Recollections from Sauti Phiri who regularly ministered at these meetings with Maundi Chombo, 2001.

⁵⁶ The term MEFRIPA was an abbreviation of **M**embers, **F**riends and **P**artners.

who thought they were outside of it to appreciate their perspective of the ministry.

Low Level Rivalry between Scripture Union and Gospel Youth

The coming on the scene of the revived and charismatic Gospel Youth temporarily put it at odds with Scripture Union because Gospel Youth was apparently attracting more young people of the same age levels as Scripture Union. Prior to this period Scripture Union had for the most part of its six to seven years (since its inception) operated without competition for membership of young working adults, secondary school-leavers and college graduates. For a while Scripture Union particularly in Blantyre stood in the shadows of Gospel Youth which was reputed for exuding high charisma in its worship services and articulated an attractive winsome vision for its Motto 'Malawi for Jesus.' This excited young people for it seemed like young people were looking for a youth movement that would challenge them to action. Prominent young adults like Golden Matiya,⁵⁷ Jeffrey Thindwa,⁵⁸ Silas Kenala,⁵⁹ Dunstain Mwaungulu,⁶⁰ Lucy Honde⁶¹ and a horde of other bright illustrious young adults and those that were young at heart among whom were Gloria Chingota and others⁶² who preferred to join

⁵⁷ He worked as World Vision International Auditor before securing the position of General Manager at the Malawi Housing Corporation. He was at the time working as an auditor at the Price Waterhouse Auditing Company.

⁵⁸ A law graduate who first worked for Government, then Graham Carr and Co, before becoming World Vision Malawi's first Malawian National Director.

⁵⁹ A UNIMA Economics graduate who worked for the Reserve Bank before becoming Operations Manager under Jeffrey Thindwa in World Vision Malawi.

⁶⁰ Dunstan Mwaungulu sat on the International Tribunal bench in Tanzania, and he was formerly Malawi's High Court Judge in Blantyre.

⁶¹ Lucy Honde, a UNIMA graduate who worked as a senior officer at AMI and currently works for World Vision USA.

⁶² Mrs. Gloria Chingota, an accountant at Press Corporation, Pungulani Mkandawire, the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation Senior Engineer and Leonard Unyolo, former Chief Justice and their wives joined Gospel Youth, which later became Gospel for All.

Gospel Youth which later was renamed Gospel for All. Gospel for All thus became sensational among young people in secondary schools and colleges between the late seventies and early eighties.

School leavers and some graduates attested to the reputation Gospel Youth earned in the schools and colleges. The word that went around in vernacular was '*Gospel Youth ndi ya Hot, ma Born Again a siamasewera*' [Gospel Youth is spiritually live hot and its members do not compromise their Christian walk with worldly standards, they are the real deal]. This reputation did not augur well and sometimes relations were either strained or sour, particularly when some school leavers would come to town [Blantyre] as members of Scripture Union only to bolt for Gospel Youth in a matter of days or a few weeks.⁶³

While New Life for All met daily at Lunch hour from Mondays to Fridays, Gospel for All was designated to meet on Tuesday 5.00 pm to 7.00 pm. The Come to Jesus Choir, which had previously been meeting for fasting, prayer and practice on this day moved the day for practice to Wednesday and relocated to the Good News Room near Wenela. The first meetings attracted few members from Scripture Union among them Don Nyangulu (who was later handpicked by Musopole to lead the new movement), Makwemba Kabambe, and Lucy Honde, others included some trainee nurses and members of the Hospital Christian Fellowship among whom were Helen Moyo, Edith Nkhonjera, Irene Banda and Rosebay Phiri and of course the initial eight members of Come to Jesus Choir: John Sapulani, Kamzati Chombo and his

⁶³ Some of the school leavers and college graduates testified that when they were in their institutions, they knew Scripture Union as the only youth group in Blantyre, but when they came to live or work in Blantyre, the experience was different because they interacted with other youths in the city who told them of another youth group which was known as Gospel Youth and had a reputation for having exciting worship and outreach programmes and for exuding deep and uncompromising spirituality.

brother Maundi, Costly Gondwe, Victor Zuze, Christopher Kang'ombe, Vincent Maseko and Brighton Kawamba.⁶⁴

Dorothea Mission

Stephen Lungu and his associate Evangelists Ezra Mchakulu, Major Jimu and prolific young preacher Goliati Namizinga played a very commendable discipleship role in all the Keswick Conventions from 1975 to 1985. They volunteered not only to offer counselling services but also offered their tents which they erected adjacent to Chichiri Hall when it was full to contain the overflow crowds, and when the Keswick meetings were over the tents became the counselling chambers of the spiritually penitent that needed special assistance.⁶⁵

When Blantyre Keswick Committee decided to open another discipleship forum, the Christian Life Rally at Chichiri Hall, it was Dorothea which did not hesitate to partner with the Keswick programme until the demise of that programme in 1984. Towards 1985 one member of the ministry, Major Jimu, joined his church as its General Secretary, but Dorothea replaced him with a very talented presenter of the Gospel and musician, Jonas Ngozo, whose coming bolstered the team.

While the team went into rural areas to carry out their own evangelistic meetings they devoted much of their time to counselling and teaching in the fellowships in Blantyre. When their team leader joined Africa Enterprise following their gallant performance in the Blantyre campaign in 1983, Ezra Mchakulu and Goliati Namizinga took up the senior positions of this team. First Mchakulu became the team leader and then Namizinga took the mantle of leadership.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ It was months before the ninth member, the late Felix Kaungwe, joined the group.

⁶⁵ Int. Saiti Phiri, 2000.

⁶⁶ Narrated by Saiti Phiri, the Gospel for All stalwart, who later became one of the Dorothea evangelists and still is on the Malawi Team of Evangelists, Int. Saiti Phiri, 2001.

Every Home Crusade

As previously alluded to, Every Home Crusade in Malawi was founded by Rev John Nyirenda of the Baptist Convention of Malawi with assistance from Rev Duncan Bwanali and Rev Gideon Bomba. The EHC ministry played a very crucial role of meeting the needs of thousands of the semiliterate people who were touched by the fellowships or the evangelistic campaigns of NLFA and Gospel for All. Every Home Crusade served in both areas around Blantyre and occasionally sponsored public meetings either at Chichiri Hall or in different place around Blantyre, Mulanje, Zomba and Thyolo, and several times it sponsored Come to Jesus to go to several places for ministry. Perhaps the farthest the Choir went with EHC was Mzuzu in the North where it ministered at all the EHC meetings that week. In most of these meetings John Nyirenda utilized the preaching skills of Rev A.W.W. Mlenga, Gideon Bomba and Rev Duncan Bwanali.

Committed members of Every Home Crusade received a badge that had the symbol of a loosely chained hand pointing heaven-ward or to the sky that symbolized the freedom Christ offers to those that receive him. EHC was important to the sustainability of the spiritual lives of many in Blantyre and those from the surrounding districts of Zomba, Thyolo and Mulanje. Typically, the ministry met the voracious demand for the scriptures and the sheer hunger for knowledge of the scriptures among thousands of Born Agains.⁶⁷

The enormity of the work in Blantyre and surrounding areas was to preoccupy the organization but it seemed expansion and growth outstripped the capacity of the organization. Finally management limited the work to strategic places⁶⁸ where it placed Crusaders to handle the

⁶⁷ Int. Enoch Phiri, 1999. Enoch Phiri was one of the founding members of EHC.

⁶⁸ Districts were selected due to the gravity of responses and also how strategic they were for Christian witness. Nkhotakota had both heavy response to the EHC Ministry but also it was strategic because of the Christian witness it offered to the large and receptive Muslim population. Crusader Pat Banda and his team seemed to be making inroads into this religion. Crusader

work; thus the following districts [apart from Blantyre] Thyolo, Mulanje, Lilongwe, Zomba, Nkhotakota, Mzuzu and Karonga and later Kasungu were selected. The Crusaders acted like the face of EHC to the thousands that were touched by the ministry in those districts.⁶⁹

EHC was creative and very systematic in how they presented their material to the larger percentage of semi-literate people [of course who were 'Born Agains']⁷⁰ and so their tracts and simple Bible lessons which they distributed to those that enrolled to their bible course enabled many to get the glimpse of scriptural understanding particularly to many that either were born again through an open air message and had no one to do some kind of follow up. Every Home crusade filled a very unique and specific role ministering literally to thousands to the day when it closed its doors. It was a ministry that was not ready to die. EHC would have between three thousand to four thousand people corresponding with them and as this required a lot of manpower knowing that all this had to be carried out manually by the typewriter and all communication was through the post office at a time when there was no talk of computer utilization, fax or email in Malawi.

Andrew Gabriel's Born Again Evangelistic Association [BAEA]

Andrew Gabriel hailed from Monkey Bay in Mangochi and started his work humbly as a one man type of ministry in 1973, but gradually people began to follow him and before long it was a big nameless

Pat Banda, as a Baptist minister, also worked later as the Senior Presidential Advisor on Religious Affairs. For the Crusaders see: Hany Longwe, *Christians by Grace – Baptists by Choice. A History of the Baptist Convention of Malawi*, Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, Zomba: Kachere, 2011, pp. 124-135, 144, 261.

⁶⁹ One had to be a vibrant Born Again to qualify to be an EHC crusader. Almost all of the EHC crusaders were doing wonderful discipleship work in the districts. In some districts like Mulanje, Thyolo, Nkhotakota and Kasungu, EHC were the first if not the only organization that preached the Born Again message.

⁷⁰ There were others who started the course like they were Born Again and mid way in the course got convicted of their sins and repented leading them to a genuine conversion to Christ.

organization.⁷¹ This was a development which Andrew Gabriel did not expect or anticipate. This development happened after he was 'weaned' from the feet of Rev Cydreck Mkunga at the end of 1972. Andrew Gabriel never returned to CCAP as this group began to be formed around him.

Andrew Gabriel's group was not just mesmerized by his eloquent preaching and extremely miraculous ministry of healing that soundly and effectively operated in him, but were heavily indoctrinated and believed that there was no other spiritual leader than Andrew Gabriel *Mneneri* and *Aphunzitsi* [The Prophet and Teacher]. He was adulated with extreme reverence.

The powerful operation of his healing gift moved both the poor and the rich. Among them was the rich proprietor of famous Ulendo Bus Company Mr Chikhwaza, a staunch Roman Catholic. The encounter with a Born Again Andrew Gabriel who touched and prayed for instant healing of his wife overnight changed his heart and he joined Andrew Gabriel's ministry. Not only did he follow Gabriel but supported and paid for almost every expense he incurred. As a result of Chikhwaza's phenomenal influence, reportedly Catholics in their hundreds joined Andrew Gabriel's ministry.⁷²

Andrew Gabriel brought such an unprecedented spiritual stir to Blantyre, particularly in the Southern townships of Soche East, Zingwangwa, Chimwankhunda, Chilobwe and Naotcha because of the wonders and miracles he unleashed right before their eyes, like sick people being instantly healed. Andrew Gabriel's ministry catered for the hard core, violent and difficult type of people including some that were formerly *chamba* [marijuana] smokers. Among them were the likes of William Nanchinga, Enoch Phiri, Charles Mataya, Jairus

⁷¹ Nanchinga, an Andrew Gabriel follower himself, said 'timadziwika kuti ndife anthu a Gabriel' [we were known as Gabriel's people].

⁷² Enoch Phiri, whose follower-ship of Andrew Gabriel was solid and strong, shared of in-depth knowledge of the man and his ministry.

Gelevulo, Catherine Supedi and other women who became hard core and radical Born Again Believers.⁷³

From a devotional stand point, the man was endowed with special apocalyptic experiences such as having visions of heaven and angels, and he communicated to the congregation what he was seeing in the future. He often took his group to pray all night on Soche Mountain, sometimes for days while praying and fasting. His followers attested to wonderful wonders and miracles.⁷⁴

Wherever Andrew Gabriel went people witnessed special wonders, instant verifiable healings of people who had the worst infirmities. Many women allegedly barren gave birth after being prayed for.⁷⁵ The necessity of having to register an organization was for legal reasons because the fearsome Police Special Branch were on a crackdown of any unregistered Christian organization.⁷⁶

⁷³ Catherine Supedi reported that she was such a hard core believer that she could not board a bus with Carlsberg beer or tobacco adverts on. She would choose to be late for work rather than to board such a bus because she wanted to retain her special holiness and sanctification as taught by the Prophet and Teacher Gabriel.

⁷⁴ Johannes Mndolo testified of how his spinal cord received instant healing at the touch of the prophet at Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

⁷⁵ Phiri, Sapulani and Chiwomboto all testified of great and profound works and wonders that were done by the hand of Andrew Gabriel.

⁷⁶ Christian organizations that were not registered were seen as national security concerns and easily regarded as allied to the Jehovah's Witnesses or belonging to a politically dissident group under the guise of religion, hence they would be pestered or persecuted.

Barbara Tippet, Willie Chaponda and Stewart Lane



Barbara Tippet

Barbara Tippet comes on the scene mainly in the eighties. Barbara Tippet founded Blantyre Christian Center following a sensational conversion to Christ. Tippet, a twenty eight year old wife of a company executive, Brian Tippet, was an agnostic but was being nagged by back problems. Her situation could not be treated in Malawi hospitals and so she was referred to see experts in South Africa. The experts recommended three major spinal operations which she underwent at different times. She was for some time in a plaster cast, and

was hobbling on a walking stick and lived on black coffee, painkillers and alcohol to wade off the pain.

The doctors, it appeared, recommended that she go for the fourth operation on her spine; but while she was waiting for this surgery a friend took her to Pastor Ray McCauley of Rhema Bible Church in Johannesburg. The pastor shared the word of God to her and prayed for her and she was immediately healed. Apparently this healing touched everything in her body, including her view of God as her agnosticism gave way to the acceptance of Christ as Lord and Saviour. From that point on she dedicated herself to serve the Lord and for four years she served the Lord as a lay person till 1986 when she was officially ordained by Ron Kusmaul as the first clergywoman in the ecclesial history of Blantyre.⁷⁷

Meanwhile she started a fellowship which she called Mustard Seed. There was, however, confusion from the beginning because Willie

⁷⁷ Narration by Henry Malili, alumnus of Rhema Bible Training Center, who worked closely with Barbara Tippet until later when he started his own Healing Hope Ministry.

Chaponda claimed having started a Band and a ministry by that name a year earlier than Barbara Tippet's Mustard Seed Fellowship. Her passion seemed to have been influenced by Magnus Udd, a veteran faith missionary in Malawi whose ministry Faith Christian Services worked with a pool of different rural independent churches (mostly in Mulanje, Thyolo and Chikwawa).

Barbara Tippet's Mustard Seed Fellowship was started more or less like a miniature Faith Christian Services but the difference was that her Mustard Seed was fashioned and operated like a township fellowship in the elite area of Limbe. As the fellowship grew she transferred to Polytechnic where Rev Stewart Lane had been working as Chaplain for a number of years. Although the Rev Stewart Lane was an Anglican, they shared one thing in common, which was their charismatic background.

Among the young people that associated with her was Willie Chaponda who was already in ministry of his own at the time, Zaccheus Kawalala, Henry Malili, Bright Wanyemba and others. Because of the apparent confusion and misunderstandings that developed between Tippet and Chaponda's organization, Tippet changed the name to Blantyre Christian Center. And indeed they were located right at the City center on Victoria Avenue.

Through the location of her worship center and the superiority of the materials her bookshop was selling she became a force to reckon with among others who had also set up bookshops in Blantyre like Scripture Union, New Life for All, CLAIM and Good News Bookroom. Besides their worship was in English and that beckoned the elite in Blantyre to go there. The Born Again people in Blantyre had now several 'spiritual shops' to buy from.

The elite had the option to go to Scripture Union or Gospel for All and later they had another option and this was when Willie Chaponda, partnering with Gordon Decker, a South African Bible teacher, opened what they called Mustard Seed Center on the first floor of the building that housed the Commercial Bank of Malawi office at the heart of the commercial district of Limbe Town. This offered a fourth option to the

elite Born Again people to attend fellowship after Scripture Union, Gospel for All and Blantyre Christian Center.⁷⁸

The Rev Stewart Lane played a special role as chaplain at Malawi Polytechnic, particularly in the counselling and teaching of Born Again students who found themselves in tertiary education being bombarded with anti-Christian secular ideas and postmodern philosophies hostile to the gospel and biblical revelation.⁷⁹ But apart from helping students face university elitism with Christian vibrancy, he also founded the interdenominational Cornelius Fellowship in Limbe which catered for the elite and the expatriates of Blantyre including university students. The fellowship was probably the first charismatic establishment in Blantyre.

Conclusion

The Blantyre Spiritual Awakening brought about a Born Again awakening which was on many accounts an evangelistic revival. Paradoxically this was not spearheaded by any one church but mostly by individuals like Wame, Kango, Andrew Gabriel, Gift Kaunda and para-church organizations like New Life for All, Every Home Crusade, Dorothea Mission, Gospel for All, Chimango Revival Fellowship, Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer group, Nkolokosa Prayer Group, Ndirande Prayer Group, Red Cross Lunch Hour Fellowship and other singing groups like Come to Jesus Choir, Kuunika Choir, the Deliverance Quartet, and Wambali Mkandawire.⁸⁰ But what makes this study interesting is that interdenominational fellowships were not an end in themselves but a means to an end, since towards the mid and latter part of the eighties a new climate of tolerance and acceptance towards 'Born Agains' settled in while in some mainline churches there was what could be termed as uneasy 'peace'.

⁷⁸ Recorded audio interview with Willie Chaponda, 2002.

⁷⁹ A Polytechnic student testified how Stewart Lane helped them counter anti Christian Western secular ideas through his talks and writings.

⁸⁰ All these individuals and organizations operated without denominational oversight or mandate.

Two developments came out of this: Some fellowships simply wound down as their members redirected their energies and focus on playing significant roles in their church denominations. This was the case with the following fellowships: Gospel for All Fellowship, Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer group, Nkolokosa Prayer Group, Ndirande Prayer Group and a few others in Bangwe and surrounding areas.⁸¹

⁸¹ Int. Stephen Fula, 2001.

Chapter 4: Impact of the Revival on Music and the Arts

This is a story of how the dynamism and effects of the Awakening impacted the religious musical corpus in Blantyre and surrounding areas which later trickled down to affect the whole country as the political adage says that what affects Blantyre affects Malawi. What this adage purports to say is that Blantyre is initially seen as a political barometer of the country and it seems this fittingly applies spiritually.¹ As we turn to follow developments of the Born Again musical influences in Blantyre through the chorus, choral and hymnal singing we will look at the historical perspective and impact of these spiritual developments within Blantyre and surrounding areas.

For the background to the impact of the Revival on the music and the arts in the mid-seventies and the eighties, a digression will be made to appreciate how Hebrew music was impacted with religious revivalism at the nation's high points of their religiosity in their history. Great attention in this chapter will centre on how the choruses or short musical pieces [which were originally used for orienting children to hymns and the gospel] were exploited for evangelistic outreach purposes.

The study will trace how NLFA and other groups over the years developed this musical corpus, all the while bearing in mind that "movements of the Spirit in many lands have thrown up new strains and charismatic themes on the music corpus in the last two decades prior to the eighties and how hymns, songs, and the shorter simpler chorus has have been pouring out over the past decade."² This in a way will shed light on how the choruses were reinvented and re-casted for evangelistic purposes and also how some hymns in *Nyimbo za Mulungu* with typical western (missionary) tunes and rhythm were

¹ A discussion with Matekenya, a long time resident of Ndirande in Blantyre, unearthed ideas on how things that happen in Blantyre socio-politically affect the whole country.

² Norman Warren, Simon Jenkins, *Jesus Praise*, London: Scripture Union, 1982, p. 3.

transformed to tunes with an African traditional beat, melody and rhythm, to meet not only the evangelistic charisma but also to meet the public's appreciated flare and taste of the music at that hour. Along with this historical narrative will be the effort to unveil the gradual revolution that impacted choirs and their songs. This will focus on how choral music shifted from a spiritual worship addendum to a formidable evangelistic tool.

Just as there was an abrupt rise in the number of lay preachers with powerful charisma on the evangelistic scene of the likes of Wame, Kaunda, Gabriel, Kango and Freeman, so was the rise on the choral evangelistic field of the likes of Kuunika Choir, Come to Jesus, Two Brothers in Christ, Wambali Mkandawire, Tembenukani Duet, the Holy Ghost Trio, Brothers and Sisters Choir, Deliverance Quartet, Mustard Seed Band, Living Waters Band, Jesus for All Outreach Band, Zoe Band and Disciples Band whose music caused a great stir not only in Blantyre but in the whole country via the airwaves of the national broadcasting station MBC at the time.

I will also highlight how the Awakening advanced the gospel influence into the arena of contemporary music led by elite music artists of celebrity status Greenwood [Wambali] Mkandawire, Isaac Mkukupu of the 'Zoe Band', Willie Chaponda of the 'Mustard Seed Band', Martin Kawonga and Herbert Momba of the 'Jesus for All Outreach Band' and Sapulani Chombo and his team. The chapter will also provide information on the dynamism of other artists who inspired the crowds during the Awakening.

Hebrew Music Background

For the background to all this, the development of Hebrew music and the role it played in Israel's own spiritual awakenings and worship will be useful. The history of music and particularly that of Israel's higher civilization of the musical services in the temple began with King David's reign. His time marked the period of Israel's spiritual high point - a dynamic period of religious revival. 'David was ascribed not only the creation and singing of psalms, but also the invention of musical instruments (the lyre, flute, tambourine, bell, shofar, harp, psaltery,

oboe, rattle and cymbals). Singing played a prominent part in the worship and national life of the Hebrews.¹³

It was not uncommon for the Jews to compose a song celebrating some special victory or religious experience that was significant.⁴ Israel's miraculous crossing of the Reed Sea for example was celebrated by singing the song of Moses and the song of his sister Miriam,⁵ and the dedication of Solomon's temple was so marked by an intense presence of God that it literally hindered the priests and singers from proceeding with their liturgical ministrations. One tradition says that 'the choir numbered 2,000 singers and was divided into two choirs. The Psalms, according to the Mishna, were sung antiphonally'⁶ Regardless of its orientation, music [religious or secular] generally lifts the soul and moves the heart.⁷ Evangelistic music of reputable musicians like Cliff Barrows or George Beverly Shea played a very significant role in the epochal ministry of Billy Graham, the iconic figure of American evangelical revivalism of the fifties and sixties.⁸

Developments in the Chorus Music Genre

The chorus is basically a composition in four or more parts written for a large number of singers or a song refrain in which the audience joins the soloist. In Blantyre churches choruses were mainly sung by children in Sunday school classes or Sabbath schools in the case of Seventh-day Adventists and Seventh Day Baptists. The lyrics of these choruses are hereby reproduced for the appreciation of the magnitude

³ T. Alton Bryant, *The New Compact Bible Dictionary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967, p. 382.

⁴ Ibid., p. 562.

⁵ Exodus Chapter 15.

⁶ T. Alton Bryant, *The New Compact Bible Dictionary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967, p. 382.

⁷ Fletcher Kaiya, Baptist Convention of Malawi General Secretary and a graduate of the University of Malawi trained musicians at the Baptist Seminary in Lilongwe.

⁸ Fred Bauer, *The Songs that Lift the Heart*, Minneapolis: Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1972, p. 24.

of developments that took place in this music corpus during the Awakening. Special attention will be given to the thought patterns and theological depth of the lyrics, the role of the drum and other musical instruments.

The apparent transmutation of the chorus from the cradle of Sunday school rooms to becoming valiant musical pieces on the evangelistic trail is an essential part of unparalleled historical importance in the story of the Blantyre Spiritual Awakening. The first task will be to unravel the thought patterns and theological framework of the Sunday school choruses and then contrast them with the thought patterns and theological inclinations of the evangelistic choruses. The five choruses listed here were typical Sunday school or Sabbath school children's choruses and they bear simple thought patterns aimed at orienting children to grasp the ABC of the Christian faith and provide initial spiritual edification. This included short verses made into a song to aid children to memorize verses of scripture for building up basic beliefs.

Yesu amakonda ana,	Jesus loves the children,
ana onseponsepo	all the children anywhere
Amitundu yonseyo,	Of all races,
akuda ndi oyer,	black and white
Yesu amakonda anaponsepo ⁹	Jesus loves the children anywhere
Tonse tizipita ku Sande sukulu	Let us all go to Sunday school
Amuna ndi akazi,	Men and women,
anyamata ndi atsikana	boys and girls
Tonse tizipita ku sande sukulu ¹⁰	Let us all go to Sunday school

⁹ Assemblies of God in Malawi, *Nyimbo za Chitsitsimutso*, Limbe: Literature Department, reprinted April 1976, Nyimbo No. 307.

¹⁰ Ibid., No. 306.

Kanyali kanga kakang'ono lekani kawale (3x) Kawale, kawalire Yesu ¹¹	Let my little lamp shine for Jesus Shine, shine for Jesus
Kumtengo, kumtengo Kumtengo wa moyo Kuli Yesu, Yesu wabadwa, wabadwa (2x) Kumtengo wa moyo	At the tree, at the tree At the tree of life Jesus is born, is born At the tree of life
Abusa, abusa Abusa a ng'ombe... Anzeru, anzeru Anzeru a ku m'mawa Anzeru, anzeru Anaona nyenyezi, nyenyezi	Shepherds, shepherds Shepherds of cattle Wise men, wise men Wise men of the east Wise men, wise men They saw the star, the star ¹²
Mtendere nonse, mtendere nonse Tsikuli labwino, mtendere nonse Mtendere nonse, mtendere nonse Kwa onse m'muno, mtendere nonse. ¹³	Peace to all, peace to all Good day of peace Peace to all, peace to all For all who are here peace to you.
Good morning to you This glad Sunday morning, Good morning to you'. ¹⁴	

¹¹ Ibid., No. 308.

¹² A chorus sung at St Columba CCAP Sunday school class in the late sixties under the tutelage of Rev Chinyamu.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ *Nyimbo za Chitsitsimutso*, Limbe: Literature Department 1976, No. 304.

Theological Depth in the Evangelistic Choruses

When the chorus genre was salvaged from Sunday school for formidable tasks on the evangelistic field, the music composers crafted the choruses in such a way that each line and stanza carried an evangelistic thought and notion put either as a question or a statement of fact from scripture. Apart from that the Born Again singers were endowed with rare and intense passion, zeal and emotion for this task. The message was not only in the lyrics [what they said on the subject matter] but in the manner and charisma of how they portrayed it in song [how they communicated the subject matter] as they were not merely communicating the message, they themselves were the embodiment of it. It was in their countenance as well as in their words.

As was the practice in open air evangelistic preaching, a chorus like '*Ndinali womangidwa ndamasulidwa*' [I was once bound by Satan now I have been freed] required some form of acting like someone stepping forward showing bound hands and then showing the hands freed. Another chorus like *Katundu wamu mtima tula, tula* [Lay down the burdens of your heart before the Lord] similarly required someone acting like he is carrying a burden and then inching closer to the one who acted as Christ and leaving the load [burden] before Christ. All this was to push the point and communicate the indispensability of Christ for human salvation. Sometimes choruses were programmed to spice up an open air evangelistic sermon or were sung as a preparatory tune before someone stepped forward to share a personal testimony of salvation. This would be before the evangelistic sermon was preached. Open air preaching was so programmed as to have a personal testimony shared in no more than three to five minutes and a sermon lasting no longer than twelve to fifteen minutes, and more time was allotted to counselling and prayer at individual level. The primary role of the chorus on the evangelistic trail was to let the sinner or inquirer sense the requirement for repentance and above all sense the need of a saviour in their life.¹⁵

¹⁵ Aldon Chipeta's aka 'Akuphiri', 2001 interview. He got the nickname for his zeal for evangelism, as people always saw him with his accordion strapped

The Initial Utilization of the Chorus by NLFA and other Groups

New Life for All is probably one of the leading groups that composed the first overtly evangelistic choruses in Blantyre following the successful launch of this organization at Kwacha National Cultural Centre in September 1969.¹⁶ The initial chorus reflected what has been described as the famous 'four spiritual laws'.¹⁷ This chorus appeared on the first page of an NLFA evangelistic tract which featured a green shoot of a maize plant representing new life.

Mulungu anapatsa Moyo	God gave Life
Munthu anakana Moyo	Man rejected that Life [through sin]
Yesu aperekanso Moyo	Jesus again gave New Life
Kodi mwalandira Moyo?	Have you received this Life?

It was however only in 1974 that the chorus was widely sung and made popular in Blantyre. As stated earlier NLFA evangelistic efforts hibernated in the member churches of EAM for a while because the expectation was that as the NLFA teaches churches to do evangelism there would be a trickledown effect of that effort. That was not working until the sober choice was taken to do it both ways, to teach the church as well as going solo to do it on the street corners and markets of the city.

The lyrics of the NLFA chorus as presented above offered a simple, brief and typical evangelistic message that encouraged the listeners to make a self-appraisal as to whether they were saved or not. Many that responded to this message alluded to how the Holy Spirit convicted their hearts in their efforts to dodge the last question of the chorus – "Have you received this life?" The NLFA preachers were under

on his back and bible in hand walking long distances, sometimes to places inaccessible by car, to preach the gospel.

¹⁶ This is the place where Television Malawi is located, also known as Kwacha Conference Centre.

¹⁷ Commonly used by Campus Crusade for Christ or their organization in Malawi 'Life Ministry.'

instruction to amplify this unsettling question to the inquirers. Sometimes preachers would say the question we are asking is not about whether you [the hearers] belong to a church denomination nor whether they were baptized in water rather what they wanted to know was whether the hearers had the certainty of the presence of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour in their life.¹⁸

The NLFA groups offered more than just spiritual entertainment, they were heralds of the Gospel made manifest by their jovial attitude, exuberance and artistry in their singing and skilful playing of the instruments. Open air singing and preaching brought about overwhelming conviction and responses to their messages. The whole thing was marked by strange mass conviction of sin as people wrestled with their spiritual predicament.¹⁹

The Fellowship groups creatively utilized the chorus music genre with astounding innovation and zeal. The drum was soon introduced and it became the commanding musical instrument. The majestic clapping of hands and the combination of the beat of the tambourines [which were largely being imported from South Africa overlaid with the sound of the locally made *maseche*], all that added to the mesmerizing vibes of the accordion added unrivalled quality to the musicality of the choruses. At some point people wanted to hear more choruses than hymns as the chorus re-invention became a dynamic musical enterprise that infected and affected the population. 'If one missed fellowship meetings for two consecutive meetings they would have to be coached on the newly introduced tunes [new choruses] that had just been composed in their absence.'²⁰

Even children of non-believers and of other faiths grasped the chorus sometimes to the chagrin of their unbelieving parents who did not

¹⁸ Dyson Chitekwe audio recorded interview, 2000.

¹⁹ Makina served under the ministry of New Life for All.

²⁰ Comments from Vincent Maseko, member of Come to Jesus Choir and a prolific singer himself who was at that time living in Chilomoni Township. He was a keen music leader and member of the African Assemblies of God led by Pastor J.P. Chitakata.

know how to stop the kids from singing the choruses in their backyard. Liturgically the drum was associated with worship in Christian groups and AICs like the *Azioni* [Zionist Churches]²¹ and Apostoli [Apostolic churches] and some Ethiopian churches like Chikondano Church in Ndirande. The adoption of the drum by NLFA and other groups in 1974 changed that outlook and perspective. Among the overtly evangelistic compositions which had the drum as central to the rhythm and the beat of the chorus were such choruses as '*Tsegula Mtima*'.²²

Tsegula mtima, Yesu agogoda	Open your heart, Jesus is knocking
Tsegula mtima, usazengereze	Open your heart, do not procrastinate
Tsegula mtima, Yesu agogoda	Open your heart, Jesus is knocking
Iwe ndi ine, tilape machimo.	You and I , let us repent of our sins. ²³

The chorus quoted below was an invitational chorus titled '*Bwerani nonse*' [Come all], just when the team arrived at the venue. It was strange that once people heard the drum, the clapping of hands and the vibes of the accordion, they came running, leaving the bars and the taverns to hear the gospel preaching.²⁴

One: Bwerani nonse,	Come all,
Tiyamike Mulungu (2x)	Lets praise God
All: Bwerani nonse,	Come all,

²¹ For a comprehensive study of the 30 Zionist Churches in Malawi see: Ulf Strohschne, *The Zionist Churches in Malawi. History – Theology – Anthropology*, Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, 2016.

²² Int. Victor Zuze, 2000. Victor Zuze was also a chorus and GFA worship leader.

²³ This chorus was a theological affirmation that all have sinned and have fallen short of the standard of God's righteousness and that both the preacher and those preached stood in need of a Saviour.

²⁴ Gospel for All more than once clashed with bar owners for staging an open air meeting close to their joints because people tended to be attracted and interested with all that was taking place at the open air meeting. At times this marked the loss of some trusted patrons to the bar as people repented in droves.

Tiyamike Mulungu (2x)	Lets praise God
All: Bwerani tsopanotu	Come now

The chorus below was an exhortation to convert to Christ, titled 'Tembenukani' (Repent)

One: Azibambo, tembenukani (2x)	One: Fathers [Men] turn to the Lord
All: Tembenukani:	Turn
One: Azimayi, tembenukani	Mothers [Women] turn to the Lord
All: Tembenukani:	Turn
Tembenukani, tembenukani mtima	Turn, turn your heart
Ufumu wa kumwamba wayandikira	The kingdom of heaven is at hand
One: Azibambo siyani tchimo	Fathers [Men] refrain from sin
One: Azimayi	Mothers [Women]
Siyani dama...	Refrain from licentiousness
One: Anyamata siyani chamba ²⁵	Boys and girls, refrain from marihuana

The following evangelistic chorus exhorted the hearers to lay their burdens on Christ the sin bearer '*Tula Katundu wako*' [Lay down your burden]

One: Katundu wa mu mtima, tula (2x)	The burden of your heart, lay it down
All: Tula, tula (2x)	Lay down, lay down
One: Katundu wa machimo (2x)	The burden of sin
All: Tula, tula (2x)	Lay down, lay down
All: Tula, tula (2x)	Lay down, lay down
One: Katundu wa machimo (2x)	The burden of sin
All: Tula, tula (2x)	Lay down, lay down
One: Katundu wa mu mtima, tula (2x)	The burden of your heart, lay it down

²⁵ Adapted from the annals of Gospel for All kept by Victor Zuze, 2000.

All: Tula, tula (2x)	Lay down, lay down
One: Katundu wa machimo (2x)	The burden of sin
All: Tula, tula (2x)	Lay down, lay down
One: Katundu umpatse Yesu	Give your burden to Jesus
All: Tula, tula	Lay down, lay down
One: Katundu wa machimo (2x)	The burden of sin
All: Tula, tula (2x)	Lay down, lay down

Other evangelistic choruses were typically designed to prepare non-believers for a personal testimony of salvation from one of the evangelistic team members. This would be sung just before the testifier stepped forward to share his or her personal testimony. Two choruses in this dimension were titled *Bwenzi lokometsetsa* [Jesus the greatest friend] and *Chikondi cha Yesu ndi chopambana zedi* [The love of Jesus is supreme].

All: Simdzaleka kuyenda ndi Yesu	I will not stop my walk with Jesus
Bwenzi lokometsetsa	My greatest friend
One: Simdzaleka	I will not stop
All: Simdzaleka kuyenda ndi Yesu	I will not stop my walk with Jesus
Bwenzi lokometsetsa	My greatest friend
One: Ndikadwala	When I am sick
All: Ndikadwala amandichiritsa	When I am sick he heals me
Bwenzi lokometsetsa	My greatest friend
One: Ndikafoka	When I am weak
All: Ndikafoka amandilimbitsa	When I am weak he strengthens me
Bwenzi lokometsetsa	My greatest friend
Chikondi cha Yesu	The love of Jesus
Ndi chopambana zedi	Is supreme indeed
Chikondi cha Yesu	The love of Jesus
Ndi chopambana zedi	Is supreme indeed
Chikondi cha Yesu ndi chopambana	The love of Jesus is supreme

Taonani	See [how supreme his love is]
Iye anafera pa mtanda	He died on the cross
Taonani	See [how supreme his love is]
Chifukwa cha ife	Because of us
Taonani	See [how supreme his love is]
Chikondi cha Yesu ndi chopambana	The love of Jesus is supreme

There was another chorus with almost similar Chichewa lyrics:

Chikondi cha Yesu	The love of Jesus
Ndi chopambana zedi	Is supreme indeed.
All: Amatisamalira	He cares for us
One: Mam'mawa	In the morning
All: Chikondi	Love
One: Masana	Noon
All: Chikondi	Love
One: Madzulo	Evening
All: Amatisamalira	He cares for us

One had English lyrics and was mostly sung in the Gospel for All Fellowship's Evangelistic outreach, but other fellowships also utilized the chorus:

One: I am a soldier
 All: I am a soldier in the Army (2x)
 One: In the Army
 All: I am a soldier in the Army (2x)
 All: I am a soldier in the Army of the Lord

One chorus carried a deep Christological and Trinitarian insight in its theology. This chorus was apparently borrowed from the Zion Christian Church who congregated at Pa Zion near Msika wa Njala in Chimwankhunda where the road makes a curve to go to Chilobwe. It seems likely that members of Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda

prayer group developed it to the level it was when it was popularized. The chorus became probably one of the biggest hits in the mid and latter part of the seventies:

One: Kumwambako (2x)	From heaven
All: Kumwamba (2x)	From heaven
One: Kunatsika (2x)	Descended
All: Kunatsika chimbalame	From the Heavens descended
Ngati nkhunda (2x)	A bird like a dove
One: Chinatera (2x)	It alighted and settled
All: Chinatera (2x)	It alighted and settled
One: Pa Yesuyo (2x)	On Jesus
All: Pa Yesuyo	On Jesus
Kusonyeza Mzimu woyera (2x)	To exhibit the Holy Spirit
One: Kumwambako (2x)	From the heaven
All: Kumwamba (2x)	From the heaven
One: Kunamveka (2x)	It thundered
All: Kunamveka chimkokomo	It thundered
Ngati mvula (2x)	Like a rain storm
One: Uyu ndiye (2x)	Saying this
All: Uyu ndiye (2x)	Saying this
One: Mwana wanga (2x)	This one is my son
All: Mwana wanga	My son
Mwaiyeyo ndikondwera (2x)	In whom I am well pleased

The lead singer would hum the tune and then all others would follow suit, humming amidst hand clapping and skilful drum beat from the several drums in the group.

Choruses were not just for one purpose, but were composed to meet other needs on the evangelistic field like physical healing, spiritual deliverance and exorcism or protection from witches or for a special miracle as per request and need. The chorus titled *Simphamvu* [It's

neither by power nor by might] and another one *Yesu Sing'anga* [Jesus the Healer] and *Chikondi cha Mulungu sichilephera* [The love of God does not fail] were often applied for purposes as outlined above.

Simphamvu, simphamvu	Neither by power nor by might
Sinkhondo, sinkhondo	Neither by struggle nor by war
Koma Mzimu wa Ambuye	But by the Spirit of the Lord
Mapiri asunthidwa,	Mountains will be moved,
Mapiri asunthidwa	Will be moved
Ndi Mzimu wa Ambuye	By the Spirit of the Lord
Matenda achizidwa	Diseases are healed
Chikondi cha Mulungu sichilephera	The love of God does not fail
One: Sichilephera oh!	It does not fail.
Sichilephera chikondi	The love does not fail
All: Chambuye wanga Yesu,	Of Jesus my Lord
Ichi ndidziwa oh!	Oh this I do know!
Sichilephera chikondi cha mbuye wanga.	The love of my Lord does not fail.
One: Sichilephera!	It does not fail
All: Sichilephera, sichilephera	It does not fail, it does not fail
Chikondi cha mbuye wanga Yesu,	The love of Jesus my Lord
Ichi ndidziwa oh	This I do know
Sichilephera chikondi	It does not fail,
Cha mbuye wangaaa!	The love of my Lord

Another popular chorus was titled '*Yesu Sing'anga*' (Jesus the Healer):

One: Sing'aanga! (2x)	The healer
All: Sing'aanga! Sing'anga! (2x)	The healer, the healer
One: Abale	Friends
All: Bwerani kwa Yesu oh! Sing'anga!	Come to Jesus the healer
One: Tawona	We have seen
All: Wa ku Gerasa	The man from Gerasa

One: Ziwanda zaturuka	The demons were exorcised
All: Ndi Yesu	By Jesus
Sing'aanga wa asing'anga, sing'angaaa	Healer of all healers
One: Bwerani (2x)	Come
All: Kwa Yesu Sing'aanga! (2x)	To Jesus the Healer
One: Idzani Kwa Yesu Sing'aanga	Come now to Jesus the healer
One: Oh! Sing'aanga (2x)	The healer
All: Sing'aanga! Sing'anga! (2x)	The healer! The healer
All: Idzani kwa Yesuyo sing'anga	Come now to Jesus the healer

Since there were no copyright laws or any legal systems that protected artists' musical compositions, and choruses that were composed mainly at the Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer Group had no signature to the pieces, so that to date the composers of the choruses are still anonymous to the public. Once a song or a chorus was introduced at the Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer Group the chorus would be sung in other fellowships in Bangwe, Ndirande or Chilomoni almost overnight.

There was no end to the tread-mill like composition of choruses. The Awakening marked a period of music talent explosion in Blantyre as the Born Again Movement creatively composed or re-crafted choruses taken or borrowed from other sources like from the Matchona's South African, Zambian and Zimbabwean tunes; or from AICs²⁶ like Azioni or Zion Christian Church²⁷, the Last Church, Masowe Apostles²⁸ and

²⁶ Int. R.S. Mwandidya, 2000. A chorus *Namphata basa Satana kunanda iyeko* [I have dealt a blow to Satan] popularized by the Born Agains came from Nsanje East Bank's Hebrew Christian Church and other sister churches there.

²⁷ Songs highlighted above like *Kumwambako kunatsika Chimbale ngati Nkhunda* [From the heavens came down a big bird like a Dove] came from Chilobwe Zion Church (Int. Wilson Chisambiro in 2000).

²⁸ The chorus *Tiyimbire mwana wa Davide Hosanna* [Hail the Messiah Son of David] popularized by the Born Agains in Blantyre was a direct copy of the Apostolic Church chorus (Int. Charles Mataya in 2001).

smaller Pentecostal churches.²⁹ The choruses were composed for every occasion and served such purposes as evangelism, teaching, warning, exhorting, healing, praise and worship, and even funerals like with the English chorus “He was a soldier in the army of the Lord” in celebrating the life and death of a gallant Christian or like another English chorus “On the day Pentecost Fire fell on me” for the celebration of Pentecost. *Unowacha* was for apologetics while *Tiyimbire Mwana wa Davide Hosanna* was for worship, and the list goes on.

Not all the choruses originated from the fellowships in Blantyre, others were either 'borrowed' from *matchona* who had returned from southern African countries like Zimbabwe and South Africa. Some of these *matchona* were in AICs.

It seems to be common knowledge that the song *Kumwambako Kunatsika Chimbaleme* was sung in worship at Pa Zioni (an open space near Chimwankhunda Market) before it made its way to the Born Again fellowships where it may have been further developed. Other songs in the same category are *Timuyimbire Mwana wa Davide Hosanna* borrowed from the Masowe Apostles in Chilomoni and *Aisraeli Kodi Mudandaulanji* again from the Zion Churches as attested to by Chorus specialists Charles Mataya in Blantyre and Mathemba Kachipande of Ndirande. Blessings Jimu of the East Bank in Nsanje can attest that the *Nam'phata basa Satana kunanda iyeko* chorus was borrowed from AICs in Nsanje and made its way to the Born Again fellowships in Blantyre.³⁰

The following choruses will be singled out for the areas of theological importance they addressed. The chorus quoted below was exclusively

²⁹ Vincent Maseko narrates how the *Unowacha* Chorus was a typical South African song but rendered in poorly translated Chichewa '*unowacha*' instead of '*umatsuka*' or '*umawacha*.' This chorus was first sung at African Assemblies of God Church led by Rev Chitakata in Chilomoni.

³⁰ An independent casual survey on this question will only serve to confirm this finding for in some quarters the source of some of the choruses is common knowledge among some Born Again believers.

an apologia facilitating the offensive role against Satan the devil. The thought and theological content of the following chorus emerged from the literal rendering of the Pauline text of Romans 16:20 'That the God of peace will quickly crush Satan under the sole of your feet'. The chorus was titled "We are roaring on". Its lyrics were partly in English and partly in Chichewa:³¹

One: We are roaring (2x)

All: We are roaring on (2x)

One: In Jesus' Name

All: We are roaring on

Leader: Ka Satana

One: The little Satan

All: Timangogwira kukapondaponda

All: We just grab it and trounce it

Ndikukatayauko (2x)

And throw it out

The other one in the same breath was:

One: Manyazi

Shame

All: Manyazi Satana manyaziwo (2x)

Shame on the Satan, shame

One: Manyazi

Shame

All: Manyazi Satana

Shame on Satan

One: Mtendere

Peace

All: Mtendere mwa Yesu,

Peace in Jesus,

mtenderewo (3x)

Peace

All: Mtendere mwa Yesu

Peace in Jesus

One: Mtenderewo

Peace

³¹ This Chorus was introduced to Gospel for All by Sam Phiri, a Malawian of Zambian origin, who came back to Malawi in his late teens. It was typically sung to degrade Satan's position, and that was the kind of song that made sense to the valiant Born Agains. They loved the lyrics which were both in English and Chichewa and the song became an overnight top hit in both Gospel for All and other fellowships.

All: Mtendere mwa Yesu,
mtenderewo (2x)

Peace in Jesus,
peace

Apart from the choruses that degraded and demonized the devil there were also choruses that were composed for the warning of the brethren against underestimating Satan the devil, like what this chorus intimated:

Leader: Nzeru ya Satana 2x

Satan's wisdom

All: Imabwera ngati yokoma

It comes as like its good

Leader: Imabwera poyimba,

It comes while you are singing

Leader: Imabwera pokhala,

It comes while sitting,

Imabwera poyenda

it comes when walking

All: Imabwera ngati yokoma

It comes as it like its good

Leader: Chenjera mbale, thawa mbale

Beware brother [sister], run away

All: Imabwera ngati yokoma

It comes as like it's good

Other compositions were instructional. Among these was '*Uthenga Unowacha*' borrowed from the Chilomoni based Rev Chitakata's African Assemblies of God chorus singing groups.³² This chorus decried preachers who hypocritically preach the gospel manifesting double standards:

One: Ndili ndi Uthenga wabwino

I have the good news that

Umandikondweretsa

makes me happy,

Uthenga Unowacha (2x)

Good news that makes me clean (2x)

All: Unowacha

It cleanses

One: Kuli bwino kungousiya koposa

It's better to leave it

³² The singing groups in Rev Chitakata's Church comprised largely of returnees from South Africa and Zimbabwe [Southern Rhodesia]. Some of these *matchona* brought back wives they had married in those two countries and as a result their Chichewa or Chinyanja was not so good. They used the words '*uthenga unowasha*' in the song instead of the correct Chichewa '*uthenga umatsuka*' [The gospel washes the sinful heart clean of any stain].

kuuwononga uthenga unowacha	than to spoil it
All: Unowacha	It cleanses
One: Uthengaaa - unowacha (2x)	the good news – it cleanses
All: Unowacha	It cleanses
One: Uthenga	The good news
All: Unowacha	It cleanses
Kuli bwino kungousiya koposa	It's better to leave it
kuuwononga	than to spoil it
One: Uthenga unowacha	The Good News cleanses
All: Unowachaaa	It cleanses

The chorus titled *Zungulizunguli pa Makwelero* [Going round and round at the bottom of the ladder] was sung as a warning to those that either pretended to be Born Agains or procrastinated on making the decision to follow Jesus as their personal Saviour and Lord. The chorus features the terrible predicament the impenitent will experience at the second coming of Christ presumably at the time of the rapture of the saints when Christ comes to take the church away with him. Herewith the lyrics of '*Zungulizunguli pa Makwelero*'

One: Zunguli, zunguli pamakwelero	Helplessly going round and Round stranded
All: Aaa! Ena adzatsala popita kumwamba	These will be left behind
One: Ooh!	Ooh!
All: Ena adzatsala popita kumwamba	These will be left behind
One: Nanga akumwa	How about the drunkards
All: Aaa! Ena 'dzatsala popita kumwamba	These too will be left behind
One: Nanga, nanga adama	How about the liars
All: Aaa! Ena 'dzatsala popita kumwamba	These too will be left behind
One: Nanga akuba	How about the thieves and Robbers
All: Aaa! Ena 'dzatsala popita kumwamba	These too will be left behind

One: Nanga otamba	How about the wizards
All: Aaa! Ena 'dzatsala popita kumwamba	These too will be left behind
One: Nanga wochotsa	How about the abortionists
All: Aaa! Ena 'dzatsala popita kumwamba	These too will be left behind]
One: Nanga dzimfiti	How about the witches
All: Aaa! Ena 'dzatsala popita kumwamba	These too will be left behind

A similar one was titled: *Pobwera Yesu* [When Jesus comes].

One: Pobwera Yesu kudzakhala nanga ine	At the coming of Jesus people will be in anguish
All: Pobwera Yesu kudzakhala nanga ine	At the coming of Jesus people will be in anguish x2
All: Hiii! Kudzakhala nanga ine	Uuuh! There will be anguish
One: Mayo, mayo, mayo akuba adzalira	Oh gosh! Oh gosh! Thieves will cry
All Mayo, mayo, mayo akuba adzalira	Oh gosh! Oh gosh! Thieves will cry 2x
All: Hiii! Kudzakhala nanga ine	Uuuh! There will be anguish
One: Mayo, mayo, mayo anyanga adzalira	Oh gosh! Oh gosh! Thieves will cry
All: Mayo, mayo, mayo anyanga adzalira	Oh gosh! Oh gosh! Witches will cry 2x
All: Hiii! Kudzakhala nanga ine	Uuuh! There will be anguish

Moses Phiri, a prolific accordion player and chorus leader,³³ introduced *Patsiku lomaliza*, another one of a long list of choruses that warn people against procrastinating and putting forward the decision for Christ.

³³ Moses Phiri served also as Every Home Crusade Ministry Crusader for Kasungu in the late seventies and early eighties.

One: Patsiku lomaliza x2	On the last day
All: Palibe wondiwombola	No one will save me
Koma lero lino mwai ulipo x2	But today there's a chance
Ndiwomboleni x2	Save me
One: Mbuye	Lord
All: Ndiwomboleni	Save me
Ku mlandu wa imfa	From judgment of death
One: Patsiku la Kiyama x2	On the day of Kiama
All: Palibe wondiwombola	No one will save me
Koma lero lino mwai ulipo x2	But today there's a chance
Ndiwomboleni x2	Save me
One: Mbuye	Lord
All: Ndiwomboleni	Save me
Ku mlandu wa imfa	From the judgment of death

The composers of these choruses and even of those choruses that were borrowed from other quarters largely remain anonymous: Their preoccupation was the preaching of the kingdom of God and they had no thought of gaining financially from their works nor did they think of becoming famous through such works. None sought protection of their song compositions through copyright laws nor did they seek royalties from Malawi Broadcasting Corporation or Baptist Media Center or Mema Studios. The 'Born Agains' were filled with a sense of urgency for they assumed the soon coming of Christ as an imminent manifestation.³⁴

Developments in the Utilization of the Chorus

Throughout the three years of Rev Gideon Bomba's organized regular city wide tent evangelistic ministry (1976 to 1979) the Assemblies of

³⁴ Int. Lloyd Banda 2001. Lloyd Banda was a leading member of the Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer Group from 1974 to 1986 and later became one of the Born Again deacons of St James CCAP.

God received and utilized the chorus to the maximum as an evangelistic tool. They also utilized them for worship and factored in into their liturgy at the earlier stage before the eighties. The Kanjedza Assemblies of God was endowed with many gifted chorus singers, both women and men. The pastor himself was also a good singer, a good worship leader as well as a good expositor of the word of God.

His preaching was usually interspaced with powerful choruses, and that made the sermon captivating and inspirational. The way of preaching kind of built a momentum of charisma which led listeners to tears and repentance way before the altar call was made at the end of the message. One would hear a shout of someone because they had experienced a miraculous healing or some kind of wonder. Although at times this seemed to look like confusion in worship it was generally accepted as the order of a delivery ward in a 'spiritual maternity clinic'.³⁵

Among many other prominent stalwarts of Kanjedza Assemblies of God where Gideon Bomba operated were talented preachers and chorus leaders like Pastor Gilbert Banda, Ephraim Nkhoma and elders Kapusa and Waliyala.³⁶

The impeccable utilization of the choruses in the Kanjedza Assemblies of God in the latter part of the seventies led other churches to jump on the bandwagon and utilize the chorus gracefully in their services despite their earlier resistance to this genre of worship music. Smaller churches like Forward in Faith of Reverend Chitheka, the Baptist Convention of Malawi, Apostolic Faith Mission, Salvation Army and Evangelical Brethren Church were perhaps among the earlier adopters

³⁵ Int. Maundi Chombo 2000.

³⁶ Later in the early eighties the two broke ranks with Rev Bomba of the Assemblies of God and formed their own church and eventually became pastors and co-founders of the new church.

of the chorus in their worship than all the mainline churches put together.³⁷

The usefulness of the chorus was further enhanced when Assemblies of God Press management decided to include into their already popular hymn book *Nyimbo za Chitsitsimutso* [Revival Hymns] some popular choruses in 1979. They added more choruses in 1981 and even more in 1985. The decision was from a commercial point of view a very shrewd one and well calculated. The Assemblies of God Press read the need and timely responded to it by printing a hymn book that was contemporary for the time. As a result the demand outstripped the supply because apart from meeting the need for these hymns in their churches, the fellowships bought these hymn books in large numbers.³⁸

Other religious hymn publishers like the Van Wyk Press at Nkhoma and Baptist Publications in Lilongwe perhaps for doctrinal reasons never responded to the market demand for choruses and as such they left a good commercial opportunity go begging during the Awakening in Blantyre and surrounding areas, however Assemblies of God Press, perhaps assisted by their location in Blantyre, the epicenter of the Revival, took advantage of the growing demand for choruses and recorded quite a good number of them in their Chorus hymn book. Kenneson Mbwana and Chimwemwe Chikusa in their initial album (when they were students at Chancellor College of the University of Malawi) recorded a number of choruses from *Nyimbo za Chitsitsimutso*.³⁹

³⁷ Brief interviews made with members of the listed churches at a National Church Leaders Conference convened by World Vision International in Mangochi 1998.

³⁸ This perspective was gained in my interaction with Kafotokoza in 1999 who worked for the Assemblies of God Press for many years.

³⁹ These upcoming artists saw the value and spiritual role the choruses played at the time and recorded these tunes in one of their initial albums recorded at the Baptist Media Centre.

Gradual Admittance of the Chorus in the Mainline Churches

In the mainline churches [whose church governments are hierarchical and structured] the adoption and admission of the chorus in worship was a struggle as it was bureaucratically placed in the hands of a number of committees to look at the viability of the chorus. In some churches like Zambezi Evangelical Church they admitted it but forbade the drum and handclapping. The Presbyterian Church [CCAP] at Katimba⁴⁰ first admitted chorus singing along with hand clapping but forbade the drum until very late in the eighties when they finally admitted it.⁴¹

It seemed, however, that when other mainline churches saw that the Roman Catholics permitted not only clapping of hands but even the drum in their liturgical worship, that other mainline churches began to review their objections, and one by one began to accept permitting both. Zambezi Evangelical Church congregations on the other hand took some time to accept both until the introduction of the Fellowship of Youth (FOY).

The SDA in Blantyre did not escape the controversy of the chorus that brewed in other churches. Like in any group there were those that were branded unofficially as conservative because of their hard line views against any form of change in what they called SDA 'tradition'. Therefore chorus singing, clapping of hands and the use of musical instruments in church such as drums, accordion and the guitar was interpreted as unorthodox and secular.

On the other hand there were those that were progressive in their mentality who felt change was necessary. Apparently two groups were emerging within the SDA: Those who tolerated change unofficially called 'the liberal group,' and the so called 'conservatives.' These had a tussle with the SDA's rising music stars like Allan Ngumuya and a host of other musicians who felt hedged in by the legalistic stance of

⁴⁰ Katimba CCAP was renamed Limbe CCAP in the early eighties.

⁴¹ Int. Willie Musopole, 2001.

barring them from the use of musical instruments when their counterparts in other churches were freely using them in worship.⁴²

Apart from this the other question that bothered SDA 'conservatives' was the issue of music at wedding receptions of SDA members who married across denominational lines. To invoke SDA rules in such contexts proved a tall order because people or family from another church could not put up with that. In some cases SDA parents wanted musical instruments to be played at the weddings of their sons and daughters because of what they experienced at weddings of their friends from other churches. In some cases the bride and groom would inform the church that they had decided to have a Christian Band to play at their wedding reception. All this put much pressure on SDA 'conservatives' during the Awakening.⁴³

Despite protracted debates and struggles that preceded the chorus' entry into the mainline churches, the chorus, it seems, has come to stay for good. It is interesting that the chorus has found a home not only in church liturgical practices but even in funeral rites and at weddings too. The experience in almost all mainline churches is that the chorus and modern instrumental music made their way to these churches via their Church Youth Fellowship as first port of entry. The weddings, particularly of Born again Christians, became the social frontline of influence of the chorus and Christian instrumental music to people from churches even those on the periphery of church

⁴² An SDA source, who sought anonymity, provided the inside perspectives and narrated how Allan Ngumuya was almost excommunicated from the church because of his inclination to use musical instruments. Interview with source made in 2002.

⁴³ Ruth Mwimba's testimony offered in 2003 narrated her experiences with the Blantyre Seventh-day Adventist Church where she was a member. The heated debate brewed over the question of having a Christian Band to play choruses and other Christian songs at her wedding as agreed by her fiancé and their families as opposed to the church recommended SDA choirs for the wedding entertainment.

influence.⁴⁴ At the turn of the mid-eighties most congregations adopted the chorus as necessary for liturgical purposes in both Protestant and Catholic churches. Among such choruses that were used in both branches (Protestant and Catholic) of the church are:

One: Timpembedze Ambuye (3x)	Let worship the Lord
All: Ambuye (3x)	The Lord
All: Ndiwoyenera kulandira ulemu	He is worthy to receive honour
One: Ulemuwo (3x)	Honour
All Ulemu (2x)	Honour
All: Ulemu woyenera Ambuye	Honour worthy of the Lord

A common chorus that has made it even into churches' funeral services is:

All: Abambo awa amafuna Yesu	This man wanted Jesus
Lero ampeza	Now he has found him
One: Lero Ampeza Yesu (2x)	Now he has found Jesus
All: Lero Ampeza Yesu (3x)	Now he has found Jesus

If the deceased was a woman the chorus would be:

One: Amayi awa amafuna Yesu	This lady wanted Jesus
All: Lero ampeza	Now she has found him
One: Lero ampeza Yesu (2x)	Now she has found Jesus
All: Lero ampeza (3x)	Now she has found him

The other chorus that made it successfully into the churches was the simple chorus for worship and praise:

One: Ndi wabwino Yesu (2x)	Jesus is good
All: Ndiwabwino	He is good
One: Amachiza Yesu	Jesus heals

⁴⁴ Int. Synolliya Ijalasi, 2002. Ijalasi's insights on the introduction of the chorus in the ZEC churches.

All: Amachiza	He heals
One: Amapatsa Yesu	Jesus gives
All: Amapatsa Yesu	He gives
One: Amakonda Yesu	Jesus loves
All: Amakonda	He loves

Another worship and praise chorus that made it into the churches was:

One: Ayenera ooh! Ayenera (ayenera)	Worthy oh! Worthy
All: Ayenera mwana wa nkhosa	Worthy is the lamb of God
One: Yesu ayenera	Worthy is Jesus
All: Ayenera mwana wa nkhosa	Worthy is the Lamb

Then there was a chorus composed for the exhortation of people going through illness and other health issues to rely on prayer and never resort to witchdoctors or idols or fetishes. The chorus has the following lyrics:

One: Ngakhale mabvuto achuruke	No matter what the troubles,
Motani tiyenera (2x)	We ought
All: Tiyenera kupemphera	We ought to pray
One: Oh tiyenera! (2x)	Oh we ought to
All: Tiyenera kupemphera	We ought to pray
One: Ngakhale afiti angatambe	No matter what the witches do,
Motani tiyenera (2x)	We ought
All: Tiyenera kupemphera	We ought to pray
Oh: Tiyenera! (2x)	Oh we ought to
All: Tiyenera Kupemphera	We ought to pray
One: Ngakhale Matenda achuruke motani	No matter what the illness
Motani tiyenera (2x)	We ought to
All: Tiyenera Kupemphera	We ought to pray

One: Oh Tiyenera! (2x)
All: Tiyenera kupemphera

Oh we ought to
We ought to pray⁴⁵

Talented chorus leaders such as Charles Mataya, Enoch Phiri, Mabvuto Zuze and skilled accordionists such as Victor Zuze, Moses Phiri, Vincent Maseko, Byson Ngoma, Aldon Chipeta, George Gobede and Sapulani Chombo acted as part of the exploding and expanding pool of talent that made the chorus singing popular in their respective ministries and the churches they belonged to when some of their churches finally permitted the chorus for liturgical purposes.

The Fellowships and the Denominational Hymns

Most fellowships had a “wholesale” adoption of almost all songs and hymns from *Nyimbo za Chitsitsimutso*.⁴⁶ The Born Again Movement also revisited other hymn books such as *Sumu za Ukristu*⁴⁷ and picked tunes such as the *ingoma* beat of *Kale Achiuta Mukatemwa Charo*⁴⁸ [God loved the World from long time ago] and so popularized it that it almost became the Born Again anthem at every evangelistic fellowship. Another popular hymn from *Sumu za Ukristu* greatly liked and popularized by the fellowships was '*Fumu Yesu ndapulika nchemo yinu*' [Lord Jesus I hear your welcome voice]. From *Nyimbo za Mulungu*⁴⁹ there were such hymns as Nos. 21, 30, 39, 145, 180, 336, and other songs whose lyrics have not been highlighted here for lack of space. While these hymns had their western/missionary tunes, during the Awakening beat and rhythm of these songs were changed

⁴⁵ Lloyd Banda's recollection of the times when he was a member of the Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer group from 1974 to 1986 and a deacon at St James CCAP.

⁴⁶ This hymn book was widely published by Assemblies of God Publications.

⁴⁷ *Sumu za Ukristu* is solely the property of the Livingstonia Synod of the CCAP in Northern Malawi.

⁴⁸ Kenneth R. Ross (ed), *Christianity in Malawi*, Gweru: Mambo-Kachere, 1996, p. 53.

⁴⁹ *Nyimbo za Mulungu*, although widely used by the CCAP, is initially the product of the Federated Missions of Nyasaland, CLAIM, Blantyre.

into what was largely referred to as the African beat of the same tunes. The military marching beat in some of these songs resonated with the revival charisma of that hour. Here are some of the lyrics from *Nyimbo za Mulungu*:

Hymn No. 21

One: Tiyimbe Nyimbo	Let's sing
zotamanda Mulungu wathu	songs of praise for our God
All: Mulungu wathu wabwino	Our good and gracious God
One: Atiphunzitsa	He teaches us
All: Atiphunzitsa ife njira	He teaches us the way
One: Za chikondano	Of love
All: Za chikondano chakechi	Of that love of his

Chorus

One: Tilondelonde	Let's zealously follow
All: Tilondelonde njira yake	Follow his way
One: Yakutifikitsa	That takes us to
All: Yakutifikitsa m'mwambamo	That takes us to heaven
One: Tikadagwira	While we labour
All: Tikadagwira ntchito yake	While we labour doing his work
All: Tinke Kumwamba komweko	After that we go to heaven

Hymn 30 in Nyimbo za Mulungu

All: Munthu wa Zisoniyo	Man acquainted with sorrows
One: Tim'cha dzina	We call his name
All: Tim'cha dzina lakelo	We call him Messiah
Mpulumutsi dzinanso aee!	Saviour is his name
Haleluya ndiye Yesu	Haleluya, he is Jesus

Chorus

All: Haleluya, Haleluya	Haleluya, Haleluya
One: Haleluya (2x)	Haleluya

All: Haleluya, Haleluya (2x)

Haleluya, Haleluya

All Ae! Haleluya ndiye Yesu

Oh! Haleluya he is Jesus

Hymn 145 in *Nyimbo za Mulungu*. The popular stanzas of this song were the first and the third. Sometimes these were the only stanzas that would be played or sung in the Born Again fellowships.⁵⁰

One: Mtima wa Mbuyako iwee!

The Heart of your Lord

All: Ukukondawe

Loves you dearly

One Ndiye waku

He is the one

All: Ndiye wakuona wopirabe

Who sees diligently

Bass: Ukasowa

If you lack

All: Ukasowa Bwenzi usaopeyi

If you lack a friend, do not fear

One: Chikondano

The love

All: Chikondano chake

His love

Bass: Chikwanira

Is sufficient

All: Chikwaniradi

Is indeed sufficient

One: M'munda wa Mbuyako iwee!

In the vineyard of the Lord

All: Muli nchitomo

There is a lot of work

One: Amithenga

His servants

All: Amithenga ake aigwirayo

His servants do the work

Bass: Usaimee!

Do not stand idle

All: Usaime chabe usakhale du!!

Do not stand idle

One: Yesu aku

Jesus

All: Yesu akufuna

Jesus wants

Bass: Iwee!!

He wants no other than you

All: Umthandizetu

You stand with him

⁵⁰ Critics of such African traditional tunes accused the fellowships of mimicking the funeral tunes (so called *maimbidwe a nyimbo za maliro*); however, this did not deter them from exploiting the western hymns for traditional tunes which added special meaning to the lyrics.

With Hymn 180 in *Nyimbo Za Mulungu* the popular stanzas were 1-4

All: Mbuye ndapangana	Lord I have promised
Oh! Kuyenda m'njira yanuyi,	Oh! to walk in your path
One: Kuti Ndidzayendaa!	That I will walk
All: Kuti Ndidzayendaa osaleka'yi	That I will walk and not stop
One: Mundipatse mtima,	Oh! give me the heart
All: Mundipatse mtima, Oh! Wopiramo	Give me the heart, oh, to persevere
One Wakukana zonse	That rejects everything
All: Wakukana zonse zondipingazo	That rejects obstacles

Stanza 3

All: Akathira nsembe ku mizimuyo	If they offer sacrifice to spirits
One: Ndipenyera!	I will look to you
All: Kuti ndipenyera kwanu	I will look to you
e kumwambako	In heaven
One: Tsoka ndi zonyenga,	Bad luck and deceptions
All: Tsoka ndi zonyenga zaufitizo	Bad luck and deceptions of Witchcraft
One Yesu mundilimbitse	Jesus make me strong
All: Yesu mundilimbitse ndisaopezo	Jesus make me strong not to fear these things

This was one of the hymns that encouraged Born Agains to take a firm stand against certain traditions.⁵¹

⁵¹ Certain traditions and funeral rites practiced in the villages such as *mmeto wa pa maliro* (special haircutting ritual) and others like *fisi* (a man who has death cleansing ritual sex at night with the widow of the deceased) provided a challenge for Born Agains to participate and this song provided the timely and relevant exhortation (Int. Fredrick Kasonda 2001).

Hymn no. 336 in Nyimbo za Mulungu

One: Ambiri tikondwera mwa Yesu.	We cherish our calling in Jesus.
Nanga inu	What about you?
All: Nanga inu woo! Nanga inu	Oh! How about you
One: Titasochera	Once we were lost
Tinabwerera	But we have returned
Nanga inu?	What about you?
All: Nanga inu	How about you?
O nanga inu	Oh! How about You?
Chorus	Chorus
One: Pakumva	When we hear
All: Pakumva mau a Yesu	When we hear the word of Jesus
One: Olali	The preached word
All: Olalikira tidzamumvera	We will heed what the preacher says
One: Nanga inu	Oh! How about you
All: Nanga inu	How about you
O nanga inu (2x)	Oh! How about you

Hymn No 39 *Nyimbo za Mulungu* whose English version is 'When I survey the wondrous cross' is among the songs listed here because it was also branded with an African beat of the South African Simanje-manje style. But to let the original lyrics fit into the Simanje-manje beat the singers or composers added some lyrics to build the melody such as exclamations like Ooo! and mama! They also added a number of Hallelujahs.

One: Pokumbukira	As I remember
Mtandawo mama!	The Cross, mama
All: Oooo!!	Oh!
One: Umene Mbuye nafapo, mama!	Upon which the Lord died, mama
All: Oooo!!	Oh!!

One: Alleluya (2x)	Alleluya (2x)
All: Amen alleluya amen (2x)	Amen alleluya amen (2x)
Alleluya amen (4x)	Alleluya amen (4x)
One: Zokoma za pa dzikoli mama!	The earth's pleasures, mama
All: Oooo!	Oh!!
One: Sizinga kanthu konse bi mama!	All together are not worthy, mama
All: Oooo!	Oh!!
One: Alleluya (2x)	Alleluya
All: Amen alleluya amen (2x)	Amen alleluya amen (2x)
Alleluya Amen	Alleluya Amen

The added charismatic African melodies to these songs became a kind of rediscovery of the worth of the African liturgical genuineness which people naturally connected to and enjoyed at the fellowship worship which they greatly missed when they were at their churches' structured worship that looked and sounded alien. Fellowship worship liturgically was accompanied by a lot of emotion, laughter, ululating, often with hand clapping and feet stumping.⁵²

The compilers of the Baptist Convention hymn book *Nyimbo za Chigonjetso* to some extent followed the middle line of having both types of melodies [western and traditional] tolerated in their churches. Some Baptist churches were more like a Born Again fellowship group in their worship.⁵³

A Revival of Choral and Band Music

The Awakening was seen as having revolutionized choral music from its supportive trajectory as an addendum to the preaching of the

⁵² Rev Dyson Chitekwe's recollection of the Awakening in 2001.

⁵³ Botoman Nkhoma attested to the fact that the churches which Rev Galatiya planted or where he started the worship pattern took after his flamboyant evangelistic style and as such worship in these churches was as lively as in the Born Again fellowship groups.

gospel in the church to playing the formidable role of being the central focus of the evangelistic message.⁵⁴ This apparent revolution in the role of choral music was heralded by such rising stars as the Kuunika Choir led by the charismatic Phiko, the Come to Jesus Choir whose music was spiced by the sweet voice of Costly Gondwe and the baritone voice of multi-talented Vincent Maseko, Tembenukani Duet, the New Jerusalem Choir, Two Brothers in Christ, Chaone United, Deliverance Quartet and others.

The blossoming of choral music became a factor in the conversion of many who had no serious thoughts about church or faith; and quite a number of people testified that they felt hooked to the new charisma of choral music and that this eventually drew them to hearing the gospel.⁵⁵ This was a period when interest in Simanje-manje music was rejuvenated in the country following several visits of both the Izintombi ze Simanje-manje groups and the Hurricanes from South Africa on one hand and the Rhumba/Kanindo groups from East Africa. However, Malawi's choral music competed and contested very well with these secular music expressions on air time on the National Broadcasting station MBC.⁵⁶

Kuunika Choir

Kuunika Choir started as a church choir for St Columba CCAP. But after 1977 the group sought independence to become a nondenominational choir. This followed a spate of criticism against Phiko's singing style and flamboyance which seemed to militate against '*dongosolo lachipembedzo mtchalichi*' (against the proper [Presbyterian] order of worship in church). He introduced a whole new way of singing choir music for it seemed he led the group almost in every stanza. Sometimes with the stylistic motion of his hands the choir group would pause for his half a minute sermons, then he would motion

⁵⁴ Int. Willie Musopole, 2001.

⁵⁵ Views collected from the focused group discussions.

⁵⁶ Int. Lawson Chaluluka, 1981. I got to know him very well because he arranged several recordings of Come to Jesus songs on MBC.

again and the choir would break into a chorus. All this was so artistically done that patrons were mesmerized by all this artistry in choir conducting. The 'old school' in choir singing ridiculed it but this happened to be the music people loved. Phiko was not just singing but he added to this his theatrical antics like how it will be like to be in hell, when singing of people that will be banished there because they rejected the Gospel.⁵⁷

Most of Phiko's compositions leaned towards the apocalyptic manifestations of Jesus Christ as Judge over the people, particularly those who did not heed the gospel or were hiding in the churches behind the smokescreen of religion, church titles and responsibilities.⁵⁸ Phiko's songs brought some people to the attention of the imminent coming of the Lord Jesus and as a result this caused them to seek salvation and for some rededication to Christ and his church.⁵⁹ His song titled '*Pobwera Yesu*' (whose lyrics are here presented) is typically one of a long list of Phiko's apocalyptic compositions which people generally loved and hankered for because of the accompanying antics and action.

Phiko: 'Pobwera Yesu mmitambo	When Jesus comes in the clouds
All: Adzatenga wanthu wake woyera	He will take his holy people
Kunka nawo kwa Atateee!	To go with him to the Father
Phiko: Nanga wochimwa?	What of the sinners?
All: Adzawakwapula, adzawakwapula	He will punish the sinners

⁵⁷ The group was started at St Columba in 1974 as a church choir along with other choirs like Tumbuka Choir and Gospel Choir, also from St Columba CCAP. H. Phiko became its leader and mentor. His singing was largely dismissed as the "village type" to mean that his style was traditional beat and African but like Black Mambazo of South Africa, Phiko used this unique style with ingenuity and before long he made Kuunika a household name in Blantyre.

⁵⁸ This landed him in hot soup with the leadership at St Columba as some felt the songs were disrespectful of leaders and sowing seeds of discord and dissatisfaction as narrated by Beatrice Phiri in 2001.

⁵⁹ Int. Stephen Fula, 2001.

Phiko: Tati wochimwa	What did I say
Adzachita nawo chiani?	He will do about the sinners?
All: Adzawakwapula, adzawakwapula	He will punish the sinners
Phiko: Khwa-khwa!! Khwa-khwa!!	He will hit them
All: Adzawakwapula, adzawakwapula	He will punish the sinners
Phiko: Nanga adama?	What of prostitutes?
All: Adzawakwapula, adzawakwapula	He will punish the sinners
Phiko: Khwa-khwa!! Khwa-khwa!!	He will hit them
All: Adzawakwapula, adzawakwapula	He will punish the sinners
Phiko: Nanga wanyanga	What will become of the wizards?
All: Adzawakwapula, adzawakwapula	He will punish the sinners
Phiko: Khwa-khwa!! Khwa-khwa!!	He will hit them
All: Adzawakwapula, adzawakwapula	He will punish the sinners

Then he would add to the list of categories of sinners as he could remember:

Nanga wafodya,	What of the tobacco smokers
Nanga wotamba,	What of the witches
Nanga wochamba,	What of the marijuana smokers
Nanga wabodza	What of the liars,
Nanga wochotsa	What of those who abort children

And the melody ends with *Aaaeee!!*

Another popular hit was titled: '*Moyo wamunthu ulingati duwa!*' Human life is as temporary as a flower that withers. He would exclaim *ndati chiani?* what did I say!?

All: Msamaiwale kuti	Don't forget
chithupi chidzapita kumanda	The body will go to the grave
Ndimzimuwo kwawo kwa Atate!!	And the soul will go back to God
Phiko: Moyo, Moyo Moyowuuu!	Human life
All: Moyo wa munthu	Human life is

Uli ngati duwaaa!	Like a flower that withers
Phiko: Moyo, Moyo!!	Human life
All: Kuwala mammawa	Blooms in the morning
Ndi kuyoyoka madzulooo!!	and withers in the evening
Phiko: Msamaiwale	Lest you forget
All: Kuti chithupi chidzapita kumanda	The body will go to the grave
The ndimzimuwo kwawo kwa Atate!!	The soul will go back to God
Phiko: Paja tati Moyo!	Remember what I said
All: Moyo wa munthu	Human life is
Uli ngati duwaaa!	Like a flower that withers
Phiko: Moyo, Moyo!!	Human life
All: Kuwala mammawa	Blooms in the morning
Ndi kuyoyoka madzulooo!!	And withers in the evening
Phiko: Moyo wamunthu!	Human life
All: Chithupi chidzapita kumanda	The body will go to the grave
Ndimzimuwo kwawo kwa Atate!!	And the soul will go back to God!!

Such songs had great impact on the evangelistic field, but at the same time attracted great disdain and cynicism from some people who felt that Phiko was singing about them or was targeting them. Some felt he was intimidating sinners into repentance. With all this criticism mounting of which some came from his home church St Columbus CCAP, Phiko and his friends chose independence rather than putting up with such criticism from people they categorized as '*mbuli zokhazikika m'machimo chikhalireni ziri m'chipembedzo*' [nominal and unregenerate spiritually uncircumcised people hibernating in the church].⁶⁰

⁶⁰ When Kuunika Choir left, St Columba CCAP started the Gospel Choir as its resident choir. Apart from that they had the elitist Travelers' Choir led by professional and avid musician Mjura Mkandawire, Joyce Ng'oma, Carver Bhima, his wife and others. They also had a Tumbuka Choir noted for their Tumbuka lyrics.

Independence meant that Kuunika Choir rid itself of the red tape of church protocol which constricted their movements. Kuunika Choir visited most parts of the country with their music, particularly areas in the Southern Region. Several churches and emerging parachurch organizations like EHC, NLFA, the Keswick Convention and many others hosted them in their meetings and conferences. They were busier outside of St Columba than they were within the Church. After running for a few years, Kuunika Choir got dismantled in 1982 and divisions arose in the choir. While Phiko decided to create Mphatso Choir, Kayanula and the remaining few members of Kuunika Choir proceeded to operate as Kuunika Choir without the compelling skills of Phiko, and it was mainly because of this missing pivotal role of Phiko that the choir finally dissolved and wound down about a year after the break. Phiko, on the other hand, continued to make strides with Mphatso Choir, but not with the competency of the former Kuunika Choir. Mphatso Choir sailed on till the early nineties when Phiko's role as an interdenominational choir leader was compromised by the decision to open his own Pentecostal church.⁶¹ It appeared that he did not realize much success as a church leader and his ensuing ill health removed him from the frontline of active evangelistic service till he died.⁶²

Come to Jesus Choir

Come to Jesus Choir emerged as an interdenominational choir made up mostly of 'Born Agains' in the latter part of 1976. The choir started as a duet by Victor Zuze and Vincent Maseko and later brought in Costly Gondwe, and they sang as a trio for a period of time. Later Victor Zuze invited Christopher Kang'ombe and two other girls who later dropped out. Victor Zuze then met Maundi Chombo and befriended him and ended up inviting him to join the group. Maundi Chombo then invited his cousin John Sapulani and Kamzati Chombo

⁶¹ Phiko apparently banded together with a splinter group from yet another undisclosed Pentecostal church in Thyolo and assumed the leadership of this denomination. My source was not sure of the actual name of Phiko's church except to say that it had 'End-time Pentecostal' as part of its name.

⁶² Int. Beatrice Phiri member of Kuunika Choir, 2001.

and then came Brighton Kawamba. Felix Kaungwe joined the team after a year or so. After that the team refused to take in more members. After singing for years together, Costly Gondwe got married and she went to Nairobi, Kenya with her husband and so the search for a replacement was on towards the end of 1979 and Ivy Mlaka was sighted and joined the team.

The choir maintained a taxing training programme in singing and led a stringent and ascetic life of prayer and mandatory fasting every Tuesday of each week. Once each year, the choir committed its members to an annual retreat where prayer and fasting was the main event.⁶³

Since most members of the team were unmarried it was easy to maintain tight schedules and travel to respond to mounting invitations from churches and Christian organizations. The choir maintained transparency in their relationships within and with those from without. As the popularity graph of the choir rose sharply so grew its fans and patrons. Letters received from patrons and fans of the choir were read openly in the group.⁶⁴ The choir never charged for their services or shows, for all financing of its evangelistic tours came from the tithes and sacrificial giving of the choir members themselves. Humility, discipline and moral cleanliness were demanded as the basic minimum code of ethics for every member of the Come to Jesus Choir.

Thus the choir devoted much time not only to singing practice but to evaluative reflection of the moral standing of each member and the reappraisal of each mission. The choir borrowed the fishermen's metaphor and called this exercise '*kusoka makoka*' [mending nets].

⁶³ Among the places Come to Jesus went for its annual retreats were Nyungwe Catholic Retreat Center in Chiradzulu district, R.S. Mwandidya's Farm house at Mpemba and the CCAP Cottage atop Zomba Mountain.

⁶⁴ The choir normally received hundreds of letters from admirers and those that had made genuine decisions to follow Christ. Some letters came from girls who had some designs for the young men in the group. Such letters would not be responded to.



Come to Jesus Choir: From left to right front row: Maundi Chombo, Costly Gondwe, Kamzati Chombo. The back row: Victor Zuze, Brighton Kawamba, Christopher Kang'ombe, John Sapulani, Felix Kaungwe, Vincent Maseko)

Every mission was evaluated and appraised for its pros and cons. Sometimes heated debates arose on things that were disputable, but it was in the '*kusoka makoka*' sessions that iron sharpened iron and ministry standards were consistently higher than with CTJ's counterparts. Sermons preached by any member of the group were analyzed for scriptural correctness and theological orthodoxy. No moral failures by team members were tolerated. The choir had rigorous disciplinary measures against low moral standards and immoral behaviour for its members. These standards coupled by the high level discipline resulted in a choir that operated with grace and high efficiency. The choir's profile soon rose and in less than two years the choir became a household name in the country. All mainline churches invited CTJ including the Roman Catholic parishes of St Pius in Soche East and Holy Ghost in Ndirande. The choir also fell in favour with notable government institutions like the Malawi Police Training and the Army Chaplaincy in both Blantyre and Zomba. Even the

powerful Kamuzu confidante Mama Kadzamira often asked for the Choir during the World Women's Day of Prayer she attended as guest of honour including the one she attended at Magalasi Assemblies of God Church. Such was the fame Come to Jesus realized as a singing group.⁶⁵

Among the Come to Jesus Choir's popular tunes are the following songs: The first one featured here was titled *Kale ndinali wochimwa* [Once I was a sinner]. This song catapulted Come to Jesus Choir to sudden fame. The lyrics were simple and most Born Agains identified with the song as it resonated with their Born Again conversion experience.⁶⁶ Below are the first stanza and the chorus of this famous song.

Kale ndinali wochimwa	I once was a sinner
Koma pomwe ndinalapa	But when I repented
Ambuye anakondwera nandikhulukira	The Lord graciously forgave my sin
Soprano: Oooh!	Oooh!

All: Oooh! Yehovah wanga	Oh my God Jehovah
Bass: Oh Yehova	Oh Jehovah
All: Ine ndapulumsidwa ndi chikondi chanu	I am saved by your love
Bass: Mumandi	You really
All: Mumandikondadi	You really love me

Come to Jesus Choir came up with a chorus which they sang everywhere they went; it was like their signature tune titled 'Come to J-E-S-U-S'. It carried the group's identity of Come to Jesus Choir.

Costly: Come to J-E-S-U-S (2x)

All: J-O-Y will follow (2x)

⁶⁵ Int. John Sapulani, 2001.

⁶⁶ See the background story to the composition of this song in the Appendix F.

All: J-O-Y (2x) J-O-Y will follow

All: Come to J-E-S-U-S J-O-Y will follow

After '*Kale ndinali wochimwa*' other popular songs were *Nyenyenzi* [The Star], *Masiku ano*. [These (last) days] and the 'Christian Calendar'. *Nyenyenzi* was a Christmas carol.⁶⁷

Herewith the lyrics of the song:

Costly: Nyenyenzi wawalaaa! (2x)

The star shone brightly

All: Huum! Huum! Huum! (2x)

Huum! Huum! Huum!

Costly: 'zi yawala (2x)

Shone brightly

All: Nyenyenzi yawala

The star shone brightly

Costly: Mwana mtuwa wiza! (2x)

The holy Son [of God] has come

All: Huum! Huum! Huum! (2x)

Huum! Huum! Huum!

Costly: Mtuwa wiza (2x)

The holy Son

All: Mwana mtuwa wiza

The holy Son [of God] has come

Humming Stanza

Costly: Kwananga kumaleee! (2x)

Let sin be finished

All: Huum! Huum! Huum! (2x)

Huum! Huum! Huum!

Costly: Kwa' kumale (2x)

Be finished

All: Kwananga kumaleee! (2x)

Let sin be finished

Bass: Nyenyenzi wawalaaa! (2x)

The star shone brightly

All: Huum! Huum! Huum! (2x)

Huum! Huum! Huum!

Bass: 'zi yawala (2x)

Shone brightly

Costly: Nyenyenzi yawala

The star shone brightly

All: *N-y-e-n-y-e-z-i y-a-w-a-l-a-a-a!!*

The star shone

⁶⁷ Costly Gondwe who coached the choir on how to sing this song never claimed it was her composition.

'*Masiku ano*' was among the three or four songs that addressed eschatological developments in the last days according to scriptural teaching. The first one was *Masiku ano*, the second one was titled '*Ambuye Yesu ali kubwera*' [Jesus is coming again]. The third one was titled 'Christian Calendar,' the fourth one was a composition from Amos' prophetic writings about the last days titled '*Ikudza nthawi yowawitsa*' [The time of adversity is coming]. The chorus had the statement '*Anthu adzathamanga uku ndi uko kufuna mau a Mulungu koma sadzapezeka*' [People will hunger for the word running to and fro but will not find the word of revelation].

Come to Jesus also sang songs from other hymn books like 'Jesus is coming, his saints to release.' This song proved to be a successful hit and particularly popular among students both in secondary schools and the colleges where Come to Jesus Choir was often invited by SCOM branches. In the *Masiku ano* tune the eschatological message was skillfully played as the artists blended the vocals well with the vibes from talented accordionist Victor Zuze with Maundi Chombo skillfully handling the drum. The highlight of this song was the scripture rendition of Matthew 24:10-14 by Bright Kawamba. This was done after the second stanza of the song with the choir humming in the background:

Yesu anati, koma inu mudzamva za nkhondo ndi mbiri za nkhondo, mtundu umodzi udzaukirana ndi mtundu wina ufumu ndi ufumu wina ndipo kudzakhala njala m'madera akuti ndi akuti, Ndipo Uthenga uwu wabwino wa ufumu, udzalalikidwa padziko lonse kuti ukhale umboni kwa anthu a mitundu yonse, Ndipo pomwepo chidzafika chimaliziro. Ngati Yesu atabwera lero kapena imfa itakupeza lero ungachite chiani ndi moyo wako.

Jesus said, you will hear of wars and rumours of war. One nation will rise against another nation, one kingdom against another kingdom. And there will be famine in some parts of the World. And the Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached to the whole

World and then the end shall come [If Jesus came today or if death came to you today, what can you do with your life?]⁶⁸

In the song titled '*Ambuye Yesu ali kubwera*' [The Lord Jesus is Coming again] Kamzati Chombo was programmed to break out in solo as the choir hummed and would sing the following lyrics:

Patsikulo wena adzatindinalipereka ndarama kuyendetsa ntchito yanu, Wenanso adzati ndinalikuturutsa ziwanda mu dzina lanu... koma Yesu adzati chokani sindikudziwani [Some will say remember Lord, it's me who financed your work while on earth. Others will say I exorcised evil spirits in your name but then Jesus will say go away from me, I do not know you.]

After the two popular compositions, Victor Zuze came up with another important apocalyptic tune 'The Christian Calendar.' In this song, John Sapulani gave an English rendition of Matthew 24:30-31 with striking oratory. Another song, which was introduced by Vincent Maseko, titled '*Amakhala nane*' [He abides with me], became a very popular tune as it seemed to have imbibed the international popular South African Kwela beat. The apparent dexterity of his hands on the flute and the art he displayed in blowing the flute closely sounded like that of reputed flute and saxophone star Spokes Mashiane and other South African stars. Another memorable composition was Victor Zuze's reggae beat in the song '*Mulungu atsimikiza chikondi chake kwa ife*' [God demonstrates his love for us] based on Romans 5:8. What perhaps still lingers long in people's minds is Costly Gondwe's song '*Zinali zomvetsa chisoni.*' She introduced this song to the choir. It is still not clear whether this was her composition or merely a tune taken from another song book.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ From Victor Zuze's annals of the Come to Jesus Choir.

⁶⁹ To some this song kind of provoked harrowing scenes of Easter and on many occasions patrons ended up shedding tears either of sympathy with the Christ's Calvary experience or of penitence and repentance and some even walked forward in front seeking prayer without any formal altar call.

Tembenukani Duet

The duet of Thomas Banda and Michael Chikwembani known as the Tembenukani Duet started in Zomba in 1979 where both were working in Government and at Chipiku Store respectively. At the turn of the eighties both transferred to Blantyre and they became a very popular Duet both on the airwaves of the MBC and Mema studios before it was nationalized by the autocratic regime of Kamuzu Banda. Almost all the lyrics for their compositions were in the vernacular. The lyrics were simple and people easily captured them and the people could be heard singing along with them. This brought excitement, edification and entertainment. They easily became a household name in Blantyre and Zomba and surrounding areas. Even children in the townships could be heard singing their popular numbers like '*Ambiri tionana pansi pano kutha kwa moyo nkulekana*' [We see each other here but after this life we will be separated], *Munda wa mpesa*, [The vineyard] and *Mutu ulinawo koma osaganiza* [You have the head but do not think].

Two Brothers in Christ

The story of Two Brothers in Christ follows the conversion of the leading secular artist of the popular band Joliva 77 in mid-1978 at the height of the Spiritual Awakening in Blantyre. Ebenezer Sikakane was the main preacher that year at the Blantyre Keswick Convention. His preaching style was strange because he liked to laugh and crack jokes, and that sent people rolling with laughter. But as people laughed he turned those very jokes into something that was not only relevant but also pertinent to the core of his message and this usually touched people and some would be seen crying uncontrollably.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Ebenezer Sikakane was an Evangelist from Africa Enterprise. Initially the Blantyre Keswick Convention wanted its leader and founder Michael Cassidy to be the main speaker at the Keswick Convention, but because of other commitments he sent a word that he was sending Sikakane in his place. He added that he was a man he had confidence in and promised that he would do a great job. Ebenezer Sikakane lived up to his reputation for he was a man

As alluded to, his sessions never required formal altar calls because people came forward almost uninvited for they were spiritually broken. The counsellors had a lot to do during that whole week of the Keswick Convention. Ebenezer Sikakane preached at both the youth meetings and the main meetings. Among the people that were touched during that week was George Phiri, who, following his conversion and calling to the ministry, decided to dissolve his relatively popular band, the Joliva 77 outfit, and in its place he founded 'The Two Brothers in Christ' with another converted secular music icon, Moses Mitochi, of the once highly popular Mitochi Brothers Band. The two men combined their skills with George Phiri leading on the vocals while Mitochi backed him and skillfully played the guitar.⁷¹

The Joint Choir

The Joint Choir started on the initial suggestion from EAM, particularly from Willie Musopole, who spoke to a number of choir masters and leaders for a united Blantyre City Choir to be named The Blantyre Joint Choir. The major choirs that made up the Joint Choir were the Scripture Union Choir, Brothers and Sisters Choir, the Christ the King Anglican Choir, the Kanjedza based Come Back to God Choir and other smaller choirs. It is not clear whether this suggestion was prompted by his exposure to the Billy Graham crusades where churches would unite choirs and have a thousand voices choir.

Come to Jesus Choir was invited and initially accepted to join the Joint Choir but quickly exited the group. The Joint Choir became the mother choir of the City and at its height of popularity numbered about one hundred or so members. The singing group's famous hits among

of astounding oratory and special anointing. He rarely finished his sermons that week without people shedding tears and being broken hearted seeking for a saviour.

⁷¹ Int. Moses Mitochi, 2000. Mitochi was at the time serving as Assemblies of God missionary to Muslims in Mangochi.

others were the touching lyrics of the song titled 'The Martyr Stephen' and the Keswick's popular anthem titled 'All One in Christ'.⁷²

As Kuunika Choir got dwarfed by Phiko's departure towards the mid-eighties, Come to Jesus likewise slowed down its operations and this was prompted by the transfer of some of its members from Blantyre to Lilongwe, then the blossoming new Capital City of Malawi. This was later followed by the migration of an influential member of the group, Vincent Maseko, to South Africa where his mother came from. All this followed after the choir had earlier lost talented singer Costly Gondwe's who got married to John Kachale and was at the time living in Nairobi, and Felix Kaungwe and Kamzati Chombo had their own moral and spiritual crises to deal with. The few remaining members in Blantyre felt they could not continue like this thus the apparent interim leader of Come to Jesus Victor Zuze partnered with the likes of Dorothy Moyo⁷³ and other young men and women to start the Gospel for All Choir.⁷⁴ At the time Gospel for All Choir was born, Beatrice Phiri, the long serving member of the Kuunika Choir, joined hands with talented young men among whom were Byson Ngoma and Aldon Chipeta, Clement Lungu and others to start what was known as the New Life for All Lunch Hour Choir. It was about the same time that the new choir, the Mhango Mgawi Salvation singers, emerged as a force on the gospel music scene.⁷⁵

Early Developments of Church Contemporary Music

The contemporariness of spiritual music on the Blantyre scene and on the Malawi scene was a feature and a development which was initiated by the likes of Willie Chaponda and his wife, the founders of the Mustard Seed Band, reportedly the first gospel music group to use

⁷² This anthem song would be sung at the beginning and at the closing of the Keswick Convention.

⁷³ She is now Dorothy Sauti married to AEE Evangelist Pastor Abel Sauti Phiri.

⁷⁴ The general perception of people who listened to Gospel for all Choir felt it was like Come to Jesus team B.

⁷⁵ This is the group that produced talented singers like Rev Chimwemwe Mhango, his brother Gift and their sister Mrs. Msosa.

band instruments for evangelization. The use of a band for gospel propagation was something out of the box because the mindset of many Christians then was that band music was for secular purposes. Assembling a band was not an easy fit as Chaponda could only manage to assemble old second hand music instruments and equipment from other bands which he bought from money realized from selling charcoal in Blantyre.

Once he had assembled the equipment, his second assignment was to contract guitar players and drummers from secular bands in Blantyre.⁷⁶ This gave Chaponda and his wife time to concentrate on mastering the lyrics of the vocals while the rest of the hired team took care of the instrumental part of the music. But it did not take long until by the end of 1984 contemporary music had become the new music fad in town, particularly among the elite Born Again believers.⁷⁷

Sound Pentagon Pop Star Wambali Mkandawire and his Influence

Wambali Mkandawire was reputed for factoring in contemporariness in old and perhaps forgotten spiritual songs and hymns. Modern and young people were again mesmerized with old church tunes because of the way Wambali played the music. Students in secondary schools and tertiary institutions hankered for Wambali's music. He played old tunes from *Sumu za Ukristu* with great artistic finesse on modern musical instruments, particularly the guitar. His talent was amazing and his lifestyle was unique.⁷⁸ The conversion to Christ of this famed

⁷⁶ Recorded interview with Willie Chaponda, 2001.

⁷⁷ This group consisted mostly of college students who were Born Again through the ministry of SCOM and wanted to identify themselves with modernity.

⁷⁸ Wambali Mkandawire's experiences, maturity and modern world view coupled by his overtly uncompromising spiritual stance held him head and shoulders above other Born Again believers in Blantyre. His flare, dressing and lifestyle and of course his views of what church ought to be coupled with oratory and command of English – that combination had special appeal to the modern sector of both old and young people and even among his secular admirers who were not Christians at all.

lead guitarist and vocalist Greenwood Mkandawire of the highly esteemed Blantyre based pop group, the Sounds Pentagon, surprised many and took Blantyre by storm. People wanted to hear his story in addition to his new music, which he now dedicated to his God and Saviour.⁷⁹



Wambali Mkandawire

Wambali Mkandawire unravelled a new genre in Christian music in that his beat touches *ingoma*, *vimbuza* and even *nyau* and to a certain extent mixes it with nuances of blues and jazz.⁸⁰ He combined the modern instrumentals and the traditional touch of Malawi's music with amazing skill. Wambali's music stands in its own class because it apparently belongs to a music genre of high class recognized and appreciated far beyond the borders of Malawi and even overseas.⁸¹ His music and message and personality characterized an emancipation of city youths who found in Wambali the right balance between modernity and spirituality.

Even among the well-meaning Born Agains there was an overt extremity in the preaching and teaching of the gospel which disparaged modernity as anti-God and therefore anti-Christian. This kind of preaching trailed on the fringes of legalism dictating the freedoms of the people like what was right and biblical to

⁷⁹ Greenwood Mkandawire replaced his first name by his other name Wambali [Born in a far away country] following his theological training in the UK based All Nations College. Wambali felt this name was closer to his African identity.

⁸⁰ A focused group discussion on Christian music trends in Malawi, Blantyre 2001.

⁸¹ Views from a focused group discussion 2001.

wear and what not to wear. Some forbade all modern clothing, and taught that all secular music was evil and branded all casual clothes like Jeans or wigs for women, wearing lipstick, putting on of high heeled shoes and any services from the hair saloon as outright abomination. Wambali wore casual blue jeans while exuding a great passion for the Lord and a deep spirituality. All this was to the chagrin of those people who found problems to understand him. Some even questioned if not sneered at his liberty to comfortably visit places like hotels and bars to witness to his fellows there. Mkandawire thus became a symbol of emancipation for the younger elite from colleges and working young adults in top companies.⁸²

He brought about a rediscovery of the essential value of the hymns of the early Christian converts from Malawi's Northern Region. Among such tunes are '*Chiuta ndiye Chiphokwelo chithu*'⁸³ [God is our stronghold], '*Tuwani nga ndiyo*' [Be holy as he is],⁸⁴ '*Fumu Yesu Ndapulika Nchemo inu*' [King Jesus I have heard your call].⁸⁵ His official music album came late in the mid-eighties after a short stint with Africa Evangelistic Enterprise ministry in South Africa. Wambali's new ground breaking venture into contemporary spiritual music birthed a musical corpus that has culminated in 'a major conversion' of the church's faithful to the music beat that was once demonized and prohibited in church, when musical instruments such as the saxophone, the guitar and the western drums were an anathema for church music.

In Wambali was a music artist and legend in the making, a quality which was quickly spotted by International Evangelist and President of African Enterprise, Michael Cassidy, in 1983 after his impactful heart

⁸² Recollections of Maundi Chombo, a close friend of Wambali from the early days, 2001.

⁸³ Kenneth R. Ross (ed), *Christianity in Malawi*, Gweru: Mambo-Kachere, 1996, p. 51.

⁸⁴ Fergus McPherson, "Sumu za Chifipa: Christian Songs in Malawi," *Bulletin of the Scottish Institute of Missionary Studies*, 1990-1991, pp. 36-53.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

moving performance during the Blantyre for Jesus city wide evangelistic campaign.⁸⁶

Other music icons that entered the fray for contemporariness about the same time as Wambali's transition to Christianity were 'Addah' Manda who once sang in the popular 'New Scene Band' in Blantyre, and then about the same time happened the conversion of Isaac Mkukupha, probably the best jazz singer on the Malawi scene and a talented bass guitarist. Soon Mkukupha began to testify of his new faith to fellow celebrities in his world and it did not take long for him to assemble a talented group of musicians that was singing spiritual music. His star studded multiracial band was named the Zoe [Life] Band.⁸⁷

Although this had a short time span it dished out high class music to the citizens of Blantyre, particularly to the elite who normally would be uncomfortable to congregate with other Born Again colleagues of Zingwangwa Chilobwe and Chimwankhunda or Ndirande or Bangwe prayer-groups and fellowships. This group [Zoe Band] ministered largely to the Polytechnic Students in Blantyre and to other elite gatherings at Chichiri High School, St Andrews, and Blantyre secondary schools and colleges.

The Holy Ghost Trio

The Holy Ghost Trio was a group started by Martin Kawonga, then an engineering student at the Polytechnic. Prompted by a vision to make Christ known to young upcoming fellow graduates and other elite groups they began to dish out music which the Poly students particularly liked. Most of their songs were in English and to some extent the beat and rhythm rhymed with secular pop music. Young men loved their music and felt this was the kind of 'non ascetic' spirituality they were hankering for. The sad thing, however, was that the Holy Ghost Trio was short-lived following the tragic death of one of

⁸⁶ Maundi Chombo's Recollection of the Awakening during the 1983 Blantyre for Jesus Citywide Campaign.

⁸⁷ Int. Victor Zuze, 2001.

the members in a sporting accident on Likhubula River while retreating at Likhubula CCAP Camp in Mulanje. Sapulani Chombo along with Oswald Msefula, Gabriel Nguruwe and Sam Phiri joined hands with other teens to have their own singing group that produced contemporary tunes on the same lines as that of the Holy Ghost Trio. These groups became a sensation in Gospel for All and in SCOM meetings in secondary and tertiary institutions.⁸⁸

Jesus for All Outreach Band

After a brief lull Martin Kawonga revamped his music career in the Jesus for All Outreach Band which he founded in company of other founding members like Sydney Kazuwa, Herbert Momba, Akim Chirwa and others in the early part of 1981. This was a far more mature team spiritually than the earlier Holy Ghost Trio Kawonga had headed. The group came up with their own compositions apart from playing modern English pop music sounding English tunes.

They had a clear balance of local and traditional tunes albeit sung with the contemporary touch to it. The group was popular in Blantyre's secondary schools and in tertiary institutions in the country. The band comprised members of various denominations and as such they were not limited by any denominational red tape. This explains why they freely ministered to both Protestant as well as Catholic institutions like Fatima Hospital and the College of Nursing in Nsanje. '*Si wina koma Yesu*' [It is no other than Jesus] was one of the most popular compositions that came from this group. Young and old greatly loved this tune, the beat was simple and danceable. These are the lyrics:

One: Si wina aa! (3x)	It is no other
All: Si wina koma Yesu (2x)	It is no other than Jesus
All: Ndi Yesu amene anandipulumutsa	It is Jesus who saved me
Momba: Si wina aa! (3x)	It is no other
All: Si wina koma Yesu (2x)	It is no other than Jesus

⁸⁸ Int. Victor Zuze, 2001.

Ndi Yesu amene anandichiritsa	It is Jesus who healed me
Momba: Si wina aa! (3x)	It is no other
All: Si wina koma Yesu (2x)	It is no other than Jesus
Ndi Yesu amene anandiyeretsa	It is Jesus who sanctified me

Felix Zalimba and the Disciples Band

The story of Felix Zalimba came to the limelight in Blantyre in 1986 at the onset of the Reinhard Bonnke Evangelistic campaign in Blantyre City. His story is connected to the popular 'Disciples Band' which he founded. The band boasted of rare talent of guitarists and fairly new equipment and a bunch of good and talented vocalists. They were known for their art and finesse in the way they produced and dished out their music. Besides leading such a talented pool of musicians, Zalimba was a good expositor of the word of God in his own right and a proficient Chichewa speaker. Zalimba had already been cited and recommended to the organizing committee of the Bonnke evangelistic crusade to translate for the famous international Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke. Zalimba did this work perfectly with astounding capabilities in addition to all that his Disciples Band played their music very well and that accompanied him as they dished out the best tunes on the Malawi contemporary gospel music scene.

The band also played traditional tunes with astounding dexterity. Among such songs were the *Sumu* tune '*Kale Achiuta mukatemwa charo*' [God so loved the world ages ago] and other traditional tunes like '*Aisraeli kodi mudandaulanji ndodo muli nayo Mose woloka*' [Why do you stand at the Reed Sea crying out to God when you have Moses with the staff of God?]⁸⁹ Although the fame of this band was meteoric it created an indelible mark on the promotion and effect of contemporary gospel music and spirituality in general of the Born Again Movement.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Felix Zalimba's recollections of his ministry in the mid eighties.

⁹⁰ Readson Galatiya's recollection of the Awakening, 2001.

The Blantyre Awakening and other Revival Influences

The spiritual and ecclesiastical landscape changed forever as far as church liturgy is concerned. Church liturgy in a number of denominations embraced praise and worship which was previously the preserve of the fellowships and a handful of Pentecostal churches and emerging charismatic groups in Blantyre. The chorus '*Chikondi cha Yesu ndi chopambana zedi*' can be heard in all mainline churches and it is no longer a Sunday school kids' song but a chorus for the whole church in Blantyre.

The choral singing likewise underwent a kind of 'metamorphosis' from just being a church entertainment and a respite before the preaching takes place to being the central factor in evangelism and occupying central stage in congregational praise and worship in most churches who have fully embraced contemporariness of choral music and hymns.⁹¹ Businessmen like O.G. Issah Music Merchants and other music studios in the City have witnessed unrelenting growth of this industry.⁹²

Gospel for All's hotel evangelistic outreaches and other outreaches to the City's elite venues like the French Cultural Center and the tertiary institutions relied on communicating the gospel through contemporary music to reach out to the elite of Blantyre. The organizers carefully invited such groups and personalities as Zoe Band of Isaac Mkukupha, Sapulani Chombo and his team, Wambali Mkandawire and Stanley Ndovie's group (Living Waters Band) which was an upcoming contemporary music group (sometimes the group spiced in Simanje-manje sounding beat among other contemporary tunes they played).⁹³

⁹¹ From a survey of fifteen major churches in the City of Blantyre.

⁹² From my personal discussions and interviews with Media personalities David Kamkwamba of MBC and Fletcher Kaiya of the Baptist Media Center and regular presenter of spiritual programmes on MBC.

⁹³ The Living Waters Band joined Zoe Band and other elite music groups to play to the largely elite group that gathered at the French Cultural Centre in a Gospel for All outreach.

The contemporariness of the music in Malawi could be traced to the interaction and possible acculturation from frequent exposures and exchange between Malawi's musicians and those from other countries, among whom was the iconic singer Freedom Sengwayo's (of Zimbabwe) with trips he undertook to Malawi mesmerizing patrons with his guitar skills in Blantyre.⁹⁴ Wambali Mkandawire, on the other hand, undertook trips to Zambia and to South Africa and the UK.

Then there were and still are countless cross-border exposures, visits between artists of Malawi and Zambia and Tanzania (and a good number of them were impacted by the East African Revival). Contemporariness in this case impacted Malawi with music tinged with a number of influences among which the Swahili evangelistic tone and praise worship tunes borrowed with a flavour from Tanzanian Rhumba partially mixed up with Eastern Zairian rhythms which have a touch of DRC '*Lingala*' vibes. All this ultimately rendered an indelible mark on church worship in the country and particularly on the churches in Blantyre. All this musical intercourse helped in profiling the intensity of musical acculturation both in the church and para-church organizations until this day.

⁹⁴ Sengwayo, a guitarist and vocalist with baritone voice, came from a legendary singing family of Gospel singers from a Pentecostal Zionist movement in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 5: Antecedent of the Charismatic Movement?

Historically, pundits and other interested observers have wondered whether the Charismatic Movement phenomenon towards the mid-eighties in Blantyre was an independent upswing of charismatic renewal or a subset of an existing spiritual revival. The answer to this question will probably be uncovered by getting to the historical roots.¹ The investigation will seek to appreciate the conditions and the context under which the Charismatic Movement grew and thrived. This will require that developments of the Charismatic Movement and its early influences on the international scene be looked at, appreciated and considered.

This will entail 'graphic' presentation of the spiritual context under which the charismatic theological ideologies filtered into the Born Again Movement in the country particularly through the apparent epicenter of the Awakening. This work will go beyond consideration of the dynamics that led to the birth of this movement to provide a study in the development and growth of the major charismatic entities and churches in Blantyre. Apparently the major charismatic entities and churches that will be under the scope of this work herewith are the Living Waters Church,² the Blantyre Christian Center³ the Mustard

¹ There are apparent conflicting claims out there on the question of who the initial founder of the Charismatic Movement is. Journalist Keith Banda claims that S.S. Ndovie was the 'divinely' appointed pioneer of the charismatic renewal, and there are yet others who point to Barbara Tippet. My sources are inclined towards Stewart Lane as the man who ushered in the first influences of the Charismatic Movement through the Cornelius Fellowship he founded in 1979.

² Founded by Apostle S.S. Ndovie in 1985 according to his personal testimony in 2001.

³ The same is now known by the name of Word Alive Ministry International (WAMI) built just behind the Blantyre Produce Market. Khetwayo Banda, Word Alive Ministries International (WAMI) and its Wholistic Mission, MA, Mzuzu University, 2012.

Seed Church,⁴ Calvary Family Church⁵ and others like Healing Hope⁶ and Glad Tidings Church.⁷

From a global perspective the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements are two different movements despite having some semblance. The former is over a century old while the latter is under sixty years of age and much as they all have to do with the Holy Spirit and glossolalia, they are quite distinct. The story of the Pentecostal stream is usually epitomized by the famed Azusa Street revival of 1906-9 with Agnes Ozman speaking in tongues, the real story of this whole setup begins with a man by the name William J. Seymour, the son of slave parents in Centerville, Louisiana.

As a grown man he became a student at a newly formed bible institute led by Charles Parham in Houston, TX in 1905. It was here that he learned the major tenets of the Holiness Movement. He developed a belief in glossolalia ("speaking in tongues") as a confirmation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Next year he moved to Los Angeles to minister in a church there.

As a consequence of his new found Pentecostal doctrine he was removed from the church where he had been appointed. Looking for a place to continue his work he found a run-down building in downtown

⁴ Mustard Seed started as a Band, but Willie Chaponda claims he got an express word from the Lord to start Mustard Seed Ministries and he was inspired by the phrase 'faith as a mustard seed' from the Bible. The Band, he claims, was the initial nucleus of that great and vast ministry. Recorded interview 2002.

⁵ The stages of growth of the Calvary Family Church originate from the YBF which later came under the umbrella of PRC which later devolved into the Calvary Family Church of founder Madalitso Mbewe with the encouragement of his Father Rev D.P.H. Mbewe.

⁶ Healing Hope was founded by Henry Malili following his dissension from the way Barbara Tippet ran her Blantyre Christian Center.

⁷ Glad Tidings was founded by a young regenerated convert Evans Chingana and his colleagues who had earlier trained in flying small planes. He was a trainee aircraft pilot under the now defunct Malawi Young Pioneers.

Los Angeles located on Azusa Street, and preached his beliefs there. The result was the Azusa Street Revival. It appears that the launching pad for a worldwide Pentecostal renewal was set, and its dominant feature of the Pentecostal outpouring was the "baptism with the Holy Spirit," an experience which was taken as subsequent to salvation, which was characterized by the evidence of speaking in other tongues. This was described as the crown jewel restored by what many called the 'second Pentecost.'⁸

The Perspective on the Founding of the Charismatic Movement

The beginning of the Charismatic Movement is attributed to Episcopalian cleric Father Dennis Bennett and the Lutheran cleric Larry Christenson. On April 3, 1960 Dennis Bennett at St Mark's Episcopal parish in Van Nuys, California, announced to his congregation that he had received the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit, and how this was accompanied with "speaking in unknown tongues." After receiving much opposition, Bennett resigned from his position at St Mark's and accepted an invitation to become vicar of St Luke's Episcopal Church in Seattle, Washington, which grew to be one of the strongest charismatic churches in the Northwest of the USA.⁹

For a decade, it was one of the major centers from which speaking in tongues would spread worldwide, especially in the mainline denominations. The significance of the Charismatic Movement resides in the penetration of the Pentecostal tongues practice into mainline denominations. This created a new openness to the full range of spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 (wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues) that had not been there for centuries.

Certainly not all mainline churches supported this new movement, but thousands of people inside mainline churches were experiencing "speaking in tongues" and other spiritual manifestations. This bred a

⁸ Adapted from an article titled "The New Charismatics," by Michael G. Moriarty, *Biblical Perspectives*, Vol. IV, No. 3, May-June 1991.

⁹ Ibid.

strong conviction that all of the supernatural "sign gifts" (e.g. tongues, healing, miracles, and in some cases, prophecy) were for today.¹⁰

He wrote that after 'Jesus baptizes you by the Holy Spirit your life will begin to have real power. It's like a soldier getting ammunition for his rifle.' The rise of the Charismatic Movement, as 'neo-Pentecostalism'¹¹ soon began to be called, coincided with a new interest in Christianity among young Americans, particularly those who were involved in alternative 'hippie' lifestyles. This 'Jesus Revolution' led many thousands to Christ who had been previously fascinated with hallucinogenic drug experiences. Not unnaturally, they found in the new Charismatic Movement a new 'experience' they could appreciate.¹²

The Charismatic Movement and Pentecostalism have semblances like the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second work of grace that brings power in the life of the believer, and that the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. Beyond this the charismatic movement is specifically a distinct movement from Pentecostalism. Perhaps the major area of difference is that the Charismatic Movement transcends denominational lines, there are Catholic Charismatics, who believe in a sacramental form of salvation, and there are Lutheran Charismatics, who believe that infant baptism is redemptive, and there are Baptist Charismatics who believe they are saved through faith alone. While these three types of Charismatics might vary widely in their views on the fundamentals of their faith, what they have in common is the experience of speaking in tongues and the operation of other spiritual gifts.¹³

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ J.D. Allan, *The Evangelicals: Illustrated History*, Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1989, p. 111

¹² Ibid. pp. 111, 112.

¹³ Gary E. Gilley, "Doctrinal Distinctives of the Charismatic Movement" in *Think on These Things* (a monthly contemporary theological issues publication), Springfield, Illinois: March 1999 pp. 4-10.

Charismatic Influences on the Local Scene

As early as 1977 Malawi and particularly the City of Blantyre was swathed with Pentecostal and Charismatic literature, audio cassettes from America; some of these came from reputed names of the likes of Bob Mumford, Charles Simpson, Derek Prince, and Kenneth Hagin Sr.¹⁴ In the latter part of the mid-eighties other tele-Evangelists like Jimmy Swaggart,¹⁵ Evangelist T.L. Osborn,¹⁶ David Nunn,¹⁷ Morris Cerullo,¹⁸ R.W. Shambach,¹⁹ and C.M. Ward²⁰ greatly impacted the Born Again Movement in Blantyre. Although some of these may not be described as charismatic in the strict sense of the word, their influences combined to tilt their disposition to sympathize with Pentecostalism and to the acceptance of ensuing charismatic influences which came on the scene through the ministry of the Rev Stewart Lane who established probably the first Charismatic entity in Blantyre, the Cornelius Fellowship.²¹

¹⁴ Kenneth Hagin was introduced by authors who printed his books as the pioneer in the teaching of faith through his Rhema Ministries.

¹⁵ Jimmy Swaggart Ministries in South Africa opened an office in Limbe at the Hardware House where they distributed for free a Swaggart Magazine titled '*The Evangelist*' and sold cassettes and booklets for Jimmy Swaggart.

¹⁶ Known for his miracles during his international crusades in India, Indonesia as in other African and far eastern countries.

¹⁷ David Nunn was reputed for his evangelistic messages and healing ministry where he urged listeners to touch the radio set as he prayed his prayer of healing leading to a major healing experience of John Sapulani in 1978.

¹⁸ Known for his schools of healing and faith conducted all over Africa and the World.

¹⁹ His sermons and services were perhaps the most emotional services and people claimed various miracles in Malawi.

²⁰ Born Agains loved his oratory and in-depth exposition of the scriptures.

²¹ His charismatic fellowship named Cornelius Fellowship, however, did not last longer than two years 1979-80, but it served to nurture the initial Charismatic orientation in Blantyre's spirituality.

The Cornelius Fellowship

Rev Stewart Lane, then resident parish minister of the Holy Innocent's Anglican Church in Limbe,²² founded the first Charismatic entity in Blantyre City and called it the Cornelius Fellowship. The Cornelius Fellowship bore similarities with charismatic orientations of Anglicans and Roman Catholics from such countries as South America, the US and the UK. These probably were the places where the founding father of Cornelius Fellowship got his initial exposure and charismatic orientation.

The Cornelius Fellowship won the patronage of both Anglicans and Roman Catholics. The group was so popular that expatriates [mostly white] drove all the way from Mulanje and Thyolo to attend Cornelius Fellowship in Limbe.²³ The fellow The Cornelius Fellowship won the patronage of both Anglicans and Roman Catholics. The group was so popular that expatriates [mostly white] drove all the way from Mulanje and Thyolo to attend Cornelius Fellowship in Limbe.²⁴ The fellowship opened an option for a number of elite Born Again believers who wanted to try out free worship and speaking in tongues. Besides that the Fellowship arranged a good reception for its members as they were treated with snacks and refreshments (sometimes they served even alcoholic in addition to non-alcoholic beverages). Unlike in other Born Again fellowships Cornelius never barred smoking of cigarettes.

²² Stewart Lane came to Malawi in 1965 as an English teacher at Malosa Secondary School, a priest, fellowship leader, university chaplain, author and columnist in the local daily in Malawi.

²³ The elitist nature of this fellowship was called unofficially by some people as '*Fellowship ya chizungu*' [Fellowship for white people] even though admittance was for all Christians. It was because of this fellowship that elite personalities like Isaac Mkukupha and a few others came to their conversion.

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The elite of Blantyre liked this unique fellowship while on the other hand the extremist Born Again believers condemned it as a bunch of carnal Christians in fellowship, who still have nostalgia for worldliness. While quite a number of Born Again believers stayed on with the Fellowship to the end, others left it for the more familiar fellowships like Scripture Union, Young Believers Fellowship or the Gospel for All or Fellowship of Youth and later Pentecostal Revival Crusade and Chimango Revival Fellowship.

Blantyre Christian Center and City Bible School

At the time when Cornelius Fellowship was winding down late in 1981, another charismatic entity was born and this fellowship was led by a young white married woman called Barbara Tippet²⁵, who named her fellowship the Mustard Seed Fellowship. This fellowship later changed its name to the Christian Fellowship, and for almost two years it was meeting at the Polytechnic, likely with the blessings of Stewart Lane who was Chaplain there for a long time. In 1984 she moved the fellowship down town near Downs House in the Hardeleq House.

The Blantyre Christian Centre was then joined by a white South African charismatic Bible Teacher, Gordon Decker, who founded what was known as The City Bible School, a school under the ministry of Blantyre Christian Centre. This was probably the first school with charismatic orientation in the country. Among the school's first students were Henry Malili, Stanley Ndovie, and Willie Chaponda. The total number of the students numbered between eight and ten people. The school also operated as a fellowship because they allotted a good time to prayer, praise and worship.

The relationship between Tippet and Decker rather hit the rocks because their administrative and operational styles differed within the ministry. Decker therefore decided to move out and asked the Church

²⁵ Barbara Tippet was a British national who was in her earlier life an open-minded agnostic, but her life and intellectual orientation drastically changed after going through a serious health crisis which threatened her life in 1978. She founded the Blantyre Christian Center in 1986.

of Christ at Ginnery Corner to rent him a space in their church and there he established his City Bible School.²⁶ Decker was later joined by another Bible teacher, a Mr. Ormond from New Zealand,²⁷ and the two became the teachers at the City Bible School. At the end of 1985 Gordon Decker needed to go back home for furlough and he identified Willie Chaponda, recognized from Decker's point of view as the brightest student of his class, to teach his fellows and assist Mr. Ormond.

The teachers decided to fast track his graduation to enable him to do this, but Chaponda courteously declined because he foresaw that some of his classmates would be offended by this move: As a result he waited until the last three months of their course and graduated with his peers. He then started fulltime teaching as staff of City Bible School when the next class enrolled for a year's course. Almost all the students that graduated at the City Bible School ended up as propagators of the Charismatic Movement in Blantyre and Zomba. Some went out to beef up the already existing Charismatic establishments as did Malili who actively supported Tippet in her ministry although he later parted ways with her and started his own charismatic ministry, the 'Healing Hope.' Others went outright to start their own ministries in Blantyre and other parts of Malawi.²⁸

The following churches and ministries benefited from the City Bible School: Living Waters Church, Calvary Family Church, the Blantyre Christian Center and other ministries and churches like Malili's Healing Hope, Glad Tidings of Evans Chingana, Soul Harvest ministries and the Holy Cross Ministry. The City Bible School became the third charismatic expression after Cornelius Fellowship and Mustard Seed

²⁶ Willie Chaponda's audio recorded history of both his own Mustard Seed Ministries and Blantyre Christian Center 2001.

²⁷ Ormond was a young missionary from New Zealand to South Africa, but while there he learned of Gordon Decker's ministry in Malawi, a country with apparently more needs than South Africa. While there he was invited to come over to Malawi and collaborate with him in the ministry of the Gospel.

²⁸ Audio recorded interview with Willie Chaponda, 2002.

Fellowship of Barbara Tippett which later became Blantyre Christian Center and was later renamed World Alive Church.²⁹

Willie Chaponda initially interfaced with Barbara Tippett briefly when he came to her center between 1984 and 1985. Apart from the initial Christian relationship as fellow ministers sharing the same burden of reaching the City with the Gospel Chaponda offered to assist her in developing music at her worship center. At the time Tippett had an organ which was not being used because of lack of expertise and Chaponda asked for it to be brought to the worship center. He offered to play it and also arranged a worship and praise team, and he led the vocals while playing the organ or the keyboard.³⁰

The Blantyre Christian Center meanwhile began to grow in leaps and bounds and quite sizeable crowds began to attend its lunch hour fellowship meetings and later its designated weekend meetings. Its location at Blantyre's busiest street, Victoria Avenue, was strategic, particularly for Blantyre's elite and expatriates. This marked a sudden turn-around in its fortunes as a ministry which stood alone unaffiliated to any other Evangelical association or group apart from Charismatic ministries in America and South Africa. The messages and most of the music and worship were in English. The church also boasted of a very rich bookstore which sold some of the most published works in the Charismatic world. They also sold some of the bible versions which were not available at Bible Society or CLAIM.

Chaponda was instrumental in assisting Blantyre Christian Centre develop high standards of modern worship and praise. But while he was doing all this, he was always conscious of his calling to nurture and grow his own Mustard Seed Ministries. His dream was to build a big Mustard Seed Ministries worship center in town. Thus he made it known that he would not stay at Blantyre Christian Center for good and amidst calls for him to stay he demanded that he mentors a talented young man or woman in playing the organ while he worked

²⁹ For the history of this church see: Khetwayo Banda, *World Alive Ministries International (WAMI) and its Wholistic Mission*, MA, Mzuzu University, 2012.

³⁰ Int. Willie Chaponda, 2002.

to phase out his services there. He finally got a fine young man named Bright Wanyemba whom he mentored and who later became one of the most prolific leaders of worship and praise. Chaponda then concentrated on growing his Mustard Seed Ministries from that time on.³¹

Henry Malili began to work with Barbara Tippet from the early days of Tippet's Mustard Seed Fellowship in Limbe long before it changed its name to the Christian Fellowship at the Polytechnic and later to Blantyre Christian Center. Later it was through Barbara Tippet that Malili got a scholarship to study at the Rhema Training Center in Johannesburg joining others from Zambia and Zimbabwe in a nine months long pastoral training.³²

However, after Malili was equipped through these studies and at the time when he thought he could be a possible successor to Tippet, Malili fell out of favour with Tippet and this development led him to exit the ministry and start his own Healing Hope Ministry as another Charismatic ministry. This was perhaps the fifth charismatic entity in Blantyre after Cornelius Fellowship, Tippet's Blantyre Christian Center, Gordon Decker's City Bible School and Living Waters Ministries and then Healing Hope which started operating around 1987. Barbara Tippet then replaced Malili with another bright and zealous young man named Zaccheus Kawalala with whom she left the ministry. But before Kawalala took over, a missionary friend of Tippet, Jim Lapka, filled the gap to prepare for a permanent reign of Kawalala as senior pastor of the ministry in Malawi.³³

The Denominationalization of Interdenominational Fellowships

As the Blantyre Awakening seemed to be in the final round of its outward manifestations, the once popular interdenominational fellowships of the seventies and the eighties began to wane and others

³¹ Int. Willie Chaponda, 2000.

³² Int. Henry Malili, 2001.

³³ For a study of the history see: Khetwayo Banda, "Word Alive Ministries International (WAMI) and its Wholistic Mission," MA, Mzuzu University, 2012.

phased out their old identities into new denominational identities as independent churches. The interdenominational Fellowship phase of the seventies gave way to a phase of 'denominationalization' of the once interdenominational fellowships and ministries.

This marked in a way the beginning of the end of the once mighty influential interdenominational organizations of the likes of Keswick and New Life for All, Gospel for All, Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer Group and others. These were the organizations which had thrived with great influence during the Awakening and were instrumental in breaking the jinx of cold denominational formalism and nominalism.³⁴

When the paradigm of charismatic denominationalism began to gather momentum in the middle and latter part of the eighties, the ministries of Blantyre Christian Centre, Pentecostal Revival Crusade, Mustard Seed Ministries, Living Waters Ministries and others began to evolve into denominations in their own right: For example Pentecostal Revival Crusade became Calvary Family Church, Blantyre Christian Centre evolved into a church denomination (later called Word Alive Church), Mustard Seed Ministries (which initially started as a Christian band and later operated as a band and an interdenominational fellowship in the later part of the eighties) became a charismatic church denomination known as Mustard Seed Church and some factions of the Born Again Evangelistic Association of Andrew Gabriel evolved from being fellowships to full denominations, thus Holy Cross led by Bishop Geoffrey Matoga³⁵ evolved into the Faith of God Church and a faction which broke from Matoga's Faith of God became Revival Life Charismatic Ministries led by his former protégé Charles Tsukuluz. The founder Andrew Gabriel remained with his smaller faction of the

³⁴ An observation adapted from a focused group discussion.

³⁵ The leader of this organization was an intellectual with several degrees in engineering. The man who later became a lecturer in engineering at the Polytechnic, a constituent college of the University of Malawi, and also became one of the outstanding Charismatic leaders who fought for political change under the allegedly corrupt UDF regime.

Born Again Evangelistic Association that now operates as a church denomination.³⁶

The Impact and Influence of Charismatic Doctrines

Charismatic teaching of prosperity, healing and its emphasis on living the good affluent life as God's design for every believer has won the hearts of the affluent and the elite among believers, particularly in the urban areas of Blantyre. The power and influence of eloquent Pentecostal and charismatic teachers like R.W. Shambach, Jesse Duplantis, Creflo Dollar, T.D. Jakes, Benny Hinn and Joyce Meyer and others relayed into Malawian homes through the prowess of the electronic media was irresistible to people and organizations that were previously seen as being staunchly evangelical. A good number of these ended up joining the newer emerging charismatic establishments towards the end of the middle and last quarters of the eighties.³⁷

'Evangelicals and charismatics are plainly at one in relation to such supposedly evangelical distinctives as faith and repentance; love to the Lord Jesus Christ, who forgives and saves; lives changed by the Spirit's power; learning about God through Scripture; bold, expectant, intimate free-form prayer; small group ministry; and a delight in swinging singing. Many Evangelicals will define themselves as charismatics and many Charismatics will define themselves as Evangelicals. Historically and in its current style, notwithstanding its embrace of some non-evangelical beliefs, the Charismatic movement appears as evangelicalism's half-sister.'³⁸

It appears that the picture painted by J.I. Parker on the international scene seems to rhyme and correlate with developments on the local

³⁶ The church is in South Lunzu and a smaller branch exists at his home in Monkey Bay in Mangochi.

³⁷ Kadango is now Bishop of his own Charismatic establishment and was among these people.

³⁸ J.I. Parker, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1995, p. 173.

scene. A great example in this sense is how SCOM, which was strictly evangelical, fared with the onslaught of charismatic influence in Blantyre and other urban areas in the country. It did not take too long to notice that charismatic influence and beliefs pervasively impacted the preaching and teaching and worship style of SCOM.³⁹

Emerging Leaders in the Charismatic Movement

Apostle Stanley S.S. Ndovie

Apostle Stanley S.S. Ndovie was probably the most successful leader to emerge from the charismatic fold in Blantyre in the latter part of the eighties and early nineties. Unlike a number of Born Again believers of his era, Ndovie had a strong ecclesiastical foundation and church orientation from his training and ministry with the Apostolic Faith Mission.⁴⁰ However, he also caught much of the evangelistic zeal and fire from his peers [in the Born Again Movement] through his regular association with them at the Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer Group in the latter part of the seventies.

As a young minister in his church he was recognized, perhaps revered, as an emerging leader and powerful force commanding great respect within his own church (AFM) and also outside the church. The young man was noted for his humility and social amicableness, for he mingled well with people and intelligently engaged with them. When things went awry at the AFM, it was apparent that he would fall back on his fellows he had befriended, prayed with and served within the Born Again Movement. He spoke with confidence and his testimony on how he came to know the Lord as Saviour enthralled people in the Born Again Fellowships.⁴¹

Herewith a brief synopsis on Ndovie:

³⁹ Int. Readson Galatiya, 2001.

⁴⁰ Ulf Strohhorn, *Pentecostalism in Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2005, pp. 138, 139.

⁴¹ Int. Mcford Nkhwimba, 2000.

Stanley Ndovie was only eighteen years old when he was admitted to Apostolic Faith Mission Bible College. That was the college's first generation of students studying in the classrooms at the AFM Naperi precincts. Ndovie rose to prominence while still a student at the Bible College through his intellect, wit and preaching ability. After graduation he was asked to assist Pastor Jim Phiri as co-pastor in Naperi and to teach at the college. He worked closest with Ernst Wendland. Ndovie became a successful pastor at the Church in Naperi. At that time the Naperi congregation proved to be the strongest urban church for AFM. Ndovie's pragmatism led him to introduce a band in the church called Living Waters.⁴²

Although he was not considered a prominent figure at the prayer group's meetings, he was nevertheless considered as a very necessary person to the fellowship. When it was time to start his Living Waters ministries he quietly retreated from Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer Group to his small house in Nkolokosa where he started a house fellowship which met and prayed in his house. He commanded a following both from his AFM Church and from other Born Again fellowships including Zingwangwa Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer group. These became the founding members of the Living Waters ministries.

Apostle Madalitso Mbewe of Pentecostal Revival Church (PRC)

Madalitso Mbewe was a very prominent personality during the Blantyre Spiritual Awakening; however, he was not active in other Born Again Fellowships except if he was invited to speak at such fellowships as Gospel for All, SCOM, HCF etc. He was committed to growing his own organization from



Madalitso Mbewe

⁴² Ulf Strohhahn, *Pentecostalism in Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2005, p. 139.

the beginning and this was the Young Believers Fellowship.⁴³

Between 1979 and 1981 he ingenuously built up his YBF and tilted it towards his father's Pentecostal Revival Crusade weak and rather old fashioned and traditional Pentecostal group. With the infusion of his YBF he remolded it into a modern charismatic renewal movement which won the hearts of a number of school leavers and even college graduates. This is perhaps a feat of most profound historical importance in the development of the charismatic movement in Blantyre:

The Reverend D.P.H. Mbewe founded Pentecostal Revival Crusade in Ndirande in the early sixties. He came to Malawi as a returning *Mtchona*, of course, he still has his roots in Zimbabwe [probably Gweru], where he first planted this ministry and continued to run the two strands of his ministry in both countries. However, the ministry in Malawi tended to weaken when he went away for long periods to Zimbabwe and then he would resuscitate it when he came back. While this was taking place the young Mbewe who was successful in his profession as a banker heroically run a very powerful young people's ministry the YBF as early as 1975 through to 1979. At that time he decided [obviously with the father's approval] to fuse his powerful YBF into the rather ailing PRC which at the time was largely unknown to many people in Blantyre outside Ndirande. His coming rejuvenated this latent and ailing ministry taking it from the doldrums of Ndirande to the limelight of the elitist centers of Polytechnic college hall and then later to the Chichiri Trade Fair grounds before he remodeled it further into a dynamic charismatic church, the Calvary Family Church, in 1987. Madalitso Mbewe, as a prolific preacher, was highly regarded for his charismatic prosperity teaching titled 'The Joseph Anointing.'⁴⁴

⁴³ Int. Victor Zuze, 2001.

⁴⁴ Gleaned from my discussions with the team of staff and members from Calvary Family Church at World Vision offices in 2002.

Pastor Evans Chingana of the Glad Tidings Church

The founder of Glad Tidings Church in Blantyre is Evans Chingana.⁴⁵ He founded this church with some of his colleagues he had earlier associated with at the Zomba airfield where he flew planes as a Malawi Young Pioneers government sponsored trainee pilot. The Awakening that took place in Blantyre also affected parts of Zomba town and he, along with a couple of his friends, was converted through the ministry of NLFA groups there.

When Malawi Government experienced a funding crisis for this programme, the young pilots that included Chingana were transferred to Blantyre and when it was clear that Malawi Young Pioneers could not financially sustain its air wing, these young men were discharged from their jobs. But as this door closed for them another door opened. The three young men won scholarships to train at Rhema Bible Training Center in Zimbabwe for a year or so and after their training they came back and founded the Glad Tidings Church which first opened its doors at Kudya Entertainment Center in 1990.⁴⁶

Faith of God Church of Bishop Geoffrey Matoga

Faith of God Church is another Charismatic expression that emerged from the disintegrating ministry of Andrew Gabriel's Born Again Evangelistic Association. Faith of God Church was first known as Holy Cross Fellowship. It is alleged that as Gabriel and his movement continued to be plagued by leadership and moral problems, another important group that came out of his organization (apart from Holy Cross Fellowship) was the Bible Faith Ministries of Chikhwaza, the late father of Jeremiah Chikhwaza. Other smaller groups that splintered from Gabriel are either no longer existent or merged with other fellowships. The Holy Cross Fellowship, which later became the Faith of God Church, continues with a marked level of success under the charismatic leadership of Geoffrey Matoga, who at the time was

⁴⁵ The soft spoken resilient Born Again and charismatic leader of this church is a former trained pilot under the now defunct Malawi Young Pioneers.

⁴⁶ Int. Evans Chingana, founder of Glad Tidings, 2001.

working as a lecturer in engineering at Blantyre Polytechnic, one of the constituent colleges of the University of Malawi. This man changed the fortunes of this fledgling little fellowship into a dynamic church with an impressive structure along Kenyatta Drive in Blantyre.⁴⁷

Conclusion

It is apparent that the spiritual revival was a typical evangelistic Awakening that aroused the church from the doldrums of nominal Christianity and denominational parochialism into the reality of a wider worldview beyond denominational limitations. This was the clear acknowledgment of the Kingdom of God as revealed in the New Testament, the gospel of spiritual regeneration that recognizes the living Christ as the One who sends his Spirit to pursue and concretize his agenda, spanning beyond Jewish national traditions, Church denominational traditions and Christian organizations' traditional limitations.

The interdenominational fellowships that flourished in the City in the seventies were a clear manifestation of the evangelistic gravitation of the Born Again message earlier proclaimed by the one bold but lone voice of Jack Selfridge in the late fifties and early sixties but joined by other voices in this respect, particularly through the machinery and network of the Evangelical Association of Malawi; like the Keswick ministry, but more conspicuously through the pervasive evangelistic ministry of New Life for All and the Fellowships.

This affected the religious Christian consciousness of many people in Blantyre either positively or negatively.⁴⁸ The interdenominational

⁴⁷ Appreciated from long discussions with now Apostle Dr. Charles Tsukuluza with whom I spent almost a year together as students at the Gbagada based International Bible Training Center in Lagos, Nigeria (Tsukuluza was also an associate of Bishop Matoga).

⁴⁸ Where the Born Again message affected people positively the church embraced Born Agains and grew, but where the Born Again message was received negatively, Born Agains were disparaged either by suspension or excommunication from the denomination.

fellowships did not replace the church or its roles; rather it appears, seen retrospectively, that the fellowships played the role of arousing the church from its [spiritual] slumber. Most Born Agains (apart from some that transitioned into founding church denominations of their own) chose to go back to their church denominations and complement and support the ministry there.⁴⁹

The Awakening also served the role of offering prophetic belligerence against MCP's iron hand to keep it in check during the time when there was apparent prophetic paralysis within the denominational churches 1969 to 1986. Lastly the Awakening served as God's process of bringing in fresh life into his church in Blantyre with the advent of the emerging neo-Pentecostal renewal and Charismatic Movement in the mid-eighties. Typically, revivals in every generation prompt the rise of new religious movements; and in case of the Blantyre Spiritual Awakening this marked the birthing of interdenominational fellowships and ministries of which a good number evolved into fully-fledged Charismatic denominations. This is a historical providential act of immense proportions which changed and altered the denominational landscape of Blantyre and the whole country.

⁴⁹ Among whom was Steven Fula. Fula attests to falling into a kind of trance while attending a Born Again fellowship meeting in Bangwe where he claims that he clearly heard a voice whisper to him 'What are you thinking about my Church.' From that time on he realized that the fellowships served only to enlighten him on the Born Again regeneration experience and to realize that Christ's ministry agenda was bigger than that of his own denomination CCAP but that did not warrant dumping his church.

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Bomba, Gideon, Assemblies of God Superintendent and Preacher of the Gospel, 1981

Chaluluka, Lawson, A famous Radio Producer on MBC, 1979

Chaponda, Willie, The founding leader of Mustard Seed Band and Church, 2000, 2002.

Chidzam'mbuyo, Winstone, served as teacher and Principal of Likhubula Bible Institute.

Chikafa, Cecil, Founder member and senior staff of EHC who later became Director of World Outreach Ministries in Malawi, 1999

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Chingana, Evans, founder of Glad Tidings, 2001.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Further Songs of the Come to Jesus Choir

*Madzi a Moyo*¹

Mu mtima mwa anthu muli ludzu	In the hearts of people have a thirst
Ludzulo la mumtimamo	Thirst in the hearts
Ndipo ayesa kutha ludzulo	And they think they can quench the thirst
Ndizinthu za m'dziko lino	With material things of this world
One: Koma Madzi	But the Water
All: Amoyo aliko kwa Yesu	Which Christ has
One: Omwe atha	That water quenches
All: Ludzulo la mumtimamo	The thirst
Idzani Kwa Yesu kuti mumwe	Come to Jesus where you must drink
Madzi amoyo wothe Ludzu	The water that quenches the thirst



Come to Jesus Choir after singing at a New Life for All meeting at NLFA Blantyre in 1978

¹ An excerpt from 'Madzi a moyo' song composed V.A. Zuze.

***They that Wait upon the Lord [Hymn]*²**

They that wait upon the Lord
Shall renew their strength
They shall mount up with wings as eagles
They shall run and not be warily
They shall walk and not faint
Teach me Lord Teach Lord to wait
Teach me Lord to wait
Down on my knees
Till in your own time
You answer my prayer
Teach me not to rely on what others do
But to wait for an answer from you

***Jesus is Coming [Hymn]*³**

Jesus is coming! O sing the glad word
Coming for those He redeemed by His blood,
Coming to reign as the glorified Lord!
Jesus is coming again!

Chorus

Sap & Tenor: Jesus is coming!
Bass: is coming again!
All: Jesus is coming again!
Shout the glad tidings o'er mountain and plain!

² Lyrics of this song have been played by many artists including Fred Hammond and Kevin Prosch.

³ Words by Daniel W. Whittle in hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete, compiled by Ira Sankey et al (Chicago, Illinois: The Biglow & Main Company, 1894), p. 234.

Jesus is coming again!
 Jesus is coming! The dead shall arise,
 Loved ones shall meet in a joyful surprise,
 Caught up together to Him in the skies
 Jesus is coming again!
 Jesus is coming! His saints to release
 Coming to give to the warring earth peace:
 Sinning and sighing, and sorrow shall cease

Jesus is Coming Again

Jesus is coming! The promise is true;
 Who are the chosen, the faithful, the few,
 Waiting and watching, prepared for review?

***Mulungu Analonjeza*⁴**

Mulungu analonjeza	God promised
Kupyolera mwaneneri	Through the prophets
Kuti Namwali adzaima	That a virgin will conceive
Nadzakhala m'mwana wa mamuna	And will have a male child
Dzina lake Emmanueli,	Named Emmanuel
Mpulumutsi wa dzikoli	The Saviour of the World
Mfumu ya mafumu onse ndi	King above all kings
Kalonga wa Mtendere	The prince of peace
Sap, Tenor & Alto: Wabadwaa!!	He is born
Bass: Mpulumutsi wabadwa,	The saviour is born
Bass: Wabadwa -	He is Born -
Mpulumutsi wabadwa	the saviour is born
One: Wabadwira	Born for

⁴ An excerpt from '*Mulungu analonjeza*' Come to Jesus Choir composition.

Sap, Tenor & Alto:

Kudzatipulumutsa ife,	To save us
Kunsinga za Satana mdyerekezi	From the Satan's bondage

Sap, Tenor & Alto:

Wabadwaa!!	He is born
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Bass:

Wabadwa	He is born
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Sap, Tenor & Alto:

Mpulumutsiyo	The Saviour
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Mpulumutsiyooo!!	The Saviour
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Kubwera kwa Yesu mu Dzikoli⁵

Kubwera Kwa Yesu Mu dzikoli	The coming of Jesus in this world
Kunali kuti atipatse moyo	It was to give us life
Koma wopanda Yesu mumtima	But without Jesus in your heart
Tinali-akufa pamaso pa M'lungu	We were dead before God presence

Chorus

Sap, Tenor & Alto:

Anadza kuti atipatse moyo	He came to give us life
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Bass: Wosatha	Eternal life
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Sap, Tenor & Alto:

Anadza kupulumutsa-adi	He came to save us
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Sap, Tenor & Alto:

Anadza kuti atipatse Moyo	He came to give us life
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Bass: Wosatha	Eternal life
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Sap, Tenor & Alto

Anadza kupulumutsa-aa!!!	He came to save us!!
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⁵ An excerpt from Come to Jesus Choir song '*Kubwera Kwa Yesu Mu dzikoli*'

Where would I be without Jesus [Hymn]⁶

When my burdens get heavy
I just kneel down and pray
I ask God to work 'em out
Not mine, but his own way

Chorus

Safe in his arms, what a relief
For without Jesus where would I be?
Where would I be without Jesus
Where would I spend eternity
Lost in the world full of sorrow
Without Jesus where would I be?

Instrumentals

In Chapter 14 of John verse 2 and 3
He says he's preparing a place for you and me
With him on my side that's all I'll ever need
Oh, without Jesus where would I be?
Where would I be without Jesus
Where would I spend eternity
Lost in the world full of sorrow
Without Jesus where would I be?

⁶ This was sung as a solo by Costly Gondwe on the vocals but backed by Vincent Maseko on the last chorus (he also played the tambourine) while VA Zuze and Maundi played accordion and drums respectively.

Appendix B: SCOM and its History and Role in Blantyre's Spirituality

SCOM's Founder the Reverend Franklin Chunga⁷

About SCOM's founder the Reverend Franklin Chunga: Among many, the Church in Malawi cannot go without recognizing the Rev Franklin Chunga who founded SCOM - the largest student movement in Malawi.



Rev Franklin Chunga,
Founder of SCOM at his Home in Mzuzu

Rev Franklin Chunga is an ailing person at his residence in Chimaliro in Mzuzu having retired from active ministry within and outside Malawi. Apart from serving in Livingstonia Synod of the CCAP, many young and old that have gone through Malawi's post-secondary institutions would

⁷ An Excerpt from Ndagha by Victor Kaonga used here by permission. Victor Kaonga, "SCOM's founder the Reverend Franklin Chunga" <http://ndagha.blogspot.com/2008/01/meet-rev-franklin-chunga-founder-of.html>

be thankful to him for being one of the first to introducing the Student Christian Organization of Malawi (SCOM) in 1961.

Stories of his faith and inspiration over the last forty-seven years abound and remain a challenge to many young people in Malawi and beyond. One time General Secretary of SCOM, Rev Dr Augustine Musopole, now in Taiwan, wrote that the founding of SCOM was “officially constituted in 1961 by the then Christian Council of Nyasaland, now known as the Malawi Council of Churches. Like many movements in the world, it was inspired by the Student Christian Movement, which started in the United States and spread throughout the World. It was at a time that the country was going through rapid political change.” Musopole said that in those years secondary education “was beginning to expand in order to prepare young people to work in the government. Therefore, the need for having a Christian organization to develop the spiritual potential of the students, and to assist in evangelism and provided a Christian presence for witness was felt.”

One of the people that has benefited from SCOM, Readson Galatiya, says that those that “interacted with Rev Franklin Chunga in his vibrant years will agree that he has been an inspiration to many, a man of wisdom and vision who almost single handedly with the Lord's enablement established this arm of the 'indestructible' Church of God.” Galatiya recalls that Chunga who “once served in some capacities in Dr H. Kamuzu Banda's government, was called to UK to serve the Church there some years ago. He became sick in UK to the extent that he had to come back home.” Chunga himself said due to illness he had to come back from England where he ministered for ten years.

In an interview he said he was happy that young people still appreciate the work that was done. “When I look at the church leadership today, many, many of them came to Christ through SCOM so I think it is work well done because Christ is still uplifted.” Speaking in a coarse voice he said “I want to be remembered as one of the soldiers of Christ and that I love the Lord more than my life.” Rev Chunga said he could not recall nor know when he thinks he was born but probably around 1920's and 30's. The picture here was taken in January 2008.

***SCOM Contribution to Spirituality in Malawi*⁸**

The time the SCOM was formed was indeed a kairos moment [In 1961]. Many important things were taking place and it was important that such an organization be formed to meet the challenges of the times. Our forerunners seized the kairos and came up with the SCOM. The Malawi Young Pioneers were a later development. The Catholic organization, the YCS came much later as a response to the presence of the SCOM, and latter the Moslem Youth. The SCOM was from the very beginning an indigenous organization. In other countries such organizations were called SCMs and its leadership was also indigenous.

There were many missionaries who assisted in the initial stages to get it underway, but they soon took a back seat. It was largely a student organization even though senior friends played a very significant advisory role, but it was the students themselves who run the programmes. This meant that leadership development was critical to the development of the SCOM and it is in this aspect that the SCOM has probably made its most significant contribution to spirituality and leadership development in the country. Willie Chokani was already attending a leadership course in Zambia when Dr Banda appointed him as Cabinet Minister.

The fundamentals of the SCOM are enshrined in the aims. The first aim states, "To call students to a personal faith ... and to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ." Long before being "born again" became a bone of contention the SCOM had enshrined it in its aims by the expression "true disciples". The result is that many of us were made aware of the need to accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord through the SCOM and to seek to live a life that made a qualitative difference.

The second aim speaks of deepening the spiritual life of students.

The third aim calls attention to witness through the interfacing of faith and academic knowledge. This is one area in which the SCOM has perhaps failed miserably over the years. Engagement in apologetics

8 Excerpts from a Speech delivered by Rev Augustine C. Musopole, Ph.D., Commemorating SCOM's 40 Years of Existence in 2001

while necessary to Christian witness, it is not adequate. It is too much playing the role of a defense lawyer instead of being the prosecutor. The Holy Spirit is advocate because he is the DPP. "He will prove the world wrong about sin, righteousness, and judgment" (John 16:8). We are supposed to study in such a way that we can get to the bottom of the basic assumptions of human knowledge and established as to whether they fit into the scheme of Jesus as the embodiment of truth, the truth that sets us free. This is what it means to bring every thought into captivity to Christ.

Fourth aim is about social outreach. Jesus went about doing good. The final judgment is decided on our social outreach (Matt. 25:31ff). Paul tells us that we are saved in Christ Jesus for good works that God purposed for us from the beginning of creation (Eph. 2:10)

The fifth aim is about the promotion of the kingdom of God, unity and renewal of the church, and our role as individual members of our respective denominations...

Fundamentals of SCOM

The fundamentals of the SCOM are enshrined in the aims. The first aim states, "To call students to a personal faith ... and to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ." Long before being "born again" became a bone of contention the SCOM had enshrined it in its aims by the expression "true disciples". The result is that many of us were made aware of the need to accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord through the SCOM and to seek to live a life that made a qualitative difference.

The SCOM and Spirituality

The SCOM placed a lot of emphasis on Bible study, prayer, and fellowship as a way of deepening the spiritual life of students. The regular reading and study of the Bible was seen as critical to personal spiritual growth and to meeting challenges posed by the secular world. Therefore, the sharing of the Word through group Bible studies, the holding of group prayer meetings, and the development of Christian friendships to support us on our walk of faith.

The SCOM had laid the spiritual foundation of many students upon which other organizations have built. The Scripture Union owes a lot to the work of the SCOM. The two organizations have worked hand in hand to meeting the students' spiritual needs especially Bible reading helps. Many also who were active in the SCO in their schools became active in the New Life for All. New Life for All had its origins in Latin America as Evangelism in Depth, which became New Life for All in Nigeria before coming to Malawi. The house groups and prayer cells became natural places for ex-SCO members in urban area of Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu. Perhaps Gospel for All became a working class SCO. It played a very important role in reaching out to young working people especially through Come to Jesus Choir. I would like to pay tribute to late Mrs. Costly Kachale, pioneer in gospel singing in Malawi with the Come to Jesus Choir, Victor Zuze, Brighton Kawamba and many others who were, members of the choir.

The Churches in Malawi have benefited tremendously from the work of the SCOM in terms of people who have entered the ordained ministry, those who are active church leaders, elders, deacons, and Sunday school teachers. Many of these people were called to faith and to ministry through the SCOM. I am one such. Called to faith at the national conference at Chingoni through the testimony of Sellina Chapasuka of Lilongwe Girls Secondary School in 1966. There are many others who look to the SCOM as having performed a formative role in their lives and for what they are today.

The Pentecostal Movement

The Pentecostal Movement in Malawi is a convergence of many streams that the Holy Spirit created for the glory of God, and the SCOM is one of them. The other streams are the East African Revival that came with Ugandans who visited Blantyre at one point and planted the seed of revival and renewal. St. Columba Church nurtures that seed, The Keswick meetings that called people to a personal faith and popularized the altar call appeal and the use of chorus singing, the New Life for All and its prayer cells systems - that nurtured many young preachers, Dr. Francis Schaeffer [Dr. Musopole meant to write Dr Daniel Schaeffer] and the many crusades he conducted in the 80s. While the movement

has tended towards the renewal of the churches, the process has been aborted for a number of reasons, and it has introduced many more division thus forestalling the earlier ecumenical efforts of which the SCOM was a consequence and also an agent. Among students the SCOM has become the conduit for spreading Pentecostal spirituality through chorus singing, American salesman type of preaching, sensitivity to spiritual gifts, and forces, the overnight prayer sessions, freedom of the spirit, worshipful attitudes, and the many ministries. However, with all these development has come also biblical literalism that objects to historical and cultural study of the Scriptures in order to come up with a message for today. This is what the SCOM should insist upon otherwise everything goes. St. Paul taught that we should test every spirit. This has happened because we have neglected the development of our intellectual faculties for spiritual experience. The taste of food does not tell you of its nutritional value. This is true of spiritualism, that is subjecting everything to spiritual forces whether good or bad.

Appendix C: What others have Said about Evangelist Shadrach Jonas Wame¹

His style of preaching is unique and appeals to people of all ages - something that made him really popular on radio programmes throughout the Southern Africa region where his messages could be heard on Malawi Broadcasting Corporation and Trans World Radio.

Wame who has been a preacher for over 38 years now says he went up to Standard 4. He is one of the few people that successfully served the whole Church in Malawi without [denominational] limitations [imposed on him] from his church - the Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP. The evangelist who does not get a salary funds for himself and thanks God for the various people who support his ministry. "I am not a pastor but I receive gifts as a pastor." Wame has a family, runs a shop and is a subsistence farmer and operates from his home in Salima.

Shadrach Wame²

Watching him [Wame] walk or drive in his half-ton Mazda in the streets of Salima, Shadrach Wame can be mistaken for just any other village man. He does not radiate the airs of one credited with some of Malawi's most charismatic, passionate and incisive preaching some have had to record it on cassettes for their home libraries. For 45 years, this grey-haired man of God has trekked around the country, donning a white coat and shepherding lost sheep back to God's fold. His preaching is a trademark. If it was a science, it would be patented. Wame has such ability to conduct half-an-hour long captivating and rich sermon based on one very short verse, even as short as 10 words. Blessed with a piercing but somewhat squeaky voice, a wealth of imageries, mastery of

¹ An excerpt from Ndagha by Victor Kaonga quoted here by special permission. Victor Kaonga, "In honour of Shadreck Wame" <http://ndagha.blogspot.com/2008/02/in-honour-of-shadreck-wame-and-rev.html>

² Excerpts from the journalistic works of Francis Tayanja Phiri of the Blantyre News Papers Limited. Francis Tayanja Phiri, "Wame the Preacher" www.bnltimes.com/index.php/dailytimes/headlines/features/bnltimes.com/features

narrative skill and immense humour, Wame blends the word of God with everyday examples of nature and social life. In one of his sermons he compares a sinner's life to a clay pot. The pot, to him, is a symbol of vanity. So, having a soul without Christ is like being a clay pot -- brittle and without substance...

Shadrack Wame was born on October 21, 1940 at Mwazalamba village, Traditional Authority Ndindi in Salima. He was born in the CCAP faith and was baptized in 1962. In 1963, Wame joined former president Kamuzu Banda as his gardener. He worked through the ranks and earned promotions until he became Head Gardener for State House. He retired in 1980 to concentrate on preaching.

His baptism in 1962 made him feel he was now a complete Christian. He felt he had achieved the expectations of all, including his parents. "I felt I was through with the process of becoming a full Christian. I felt I could do what I wanted, provided I went to church on Sundays and congregated with others in church forums," he said. Each Sunday, Wame was the first at church. He was dedicated he won the confidence of his congregation at Zomba CCAP church. He was made church elder.

Wame the wealth seeker

He was man of God just as much as the eye could see. In truth, the Bible alone seemed not enough for his needs. Neither was it his trusted weapon against forces of darkness. He had his own ways that his congregation could not see. "Little did the congregation know that I had a charm that enabled me to see wizards and witches and I believed that magic would protect me. "I was also visiting traditional doctors for charms to be rich," he said.

A few days before he became born again, he visited one traditional doctor and asked for charms that would turn him into a wealthy man. The doctor told him to spend a night in a grave yard. In the graveyard, Wame encountered 'ghosts' that eventually gave him charms. Upon being treated as advised, the charms turned into money equivalent to K10,000 which was then enough to buy trucks.

“Surprisingly, the witchdoctor told me not to use any of the banknotes until he conducts a ritual to neutralize the ['power this money' had] money so that it [would] be fit for use.

“He [was] even ordered me not to touch the money but [to] keep it somewhere until he gives me charms to make my heart strong,” he said.

Wame was then a model in his church, someone that others looked up to for good conduct and blameless service to God. Wame expressed a deep sense of remorse...

“I feel so sad realizing how people can base their judgment on what a person does and believe that he is holy and godly. They don't see the human deception,” he said.

But like Saul in the Bible, Wame's crimson sins were cleansed, thanks to an accident in which he nearly died. On November 28, 1967, Wame was knocked down by a car in Blantyre. He fainted. “In my unconsciousness I faced God in a vision, and at some distance, there were all my sins exposed,” said Wame. “I saw the gates of Gehenna. They opened and as I was about to enter, there suddenly swept a heavy storm from the furnace. I thought I was being received in that hell,” he said. But the episode [wind] suddenly changed course. He became conscious and realized that he was actually facing police [police men] who had taken him to Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital. He was discharged after about 10 days of hospitalization. Thereafter he had no peace of mind. He repented. He went back to the traditional doctor and gave him back the charms. He also destroyed the 'money' worth K10,000.

Wame the preacher

One night in his sleep, the angel of God told him he would be drilled in the preaching of the word of God. That lesson occurred in a vision in which Wame beheld Jesus Christ. It started at 9 pm and ended at 4 am. He wrote down everything he was taught it filled up to four pages of an A4 hard cover book. Out into the world Wame the preacher was let go. He has since been to many corners of Malawi preaching in congregations that invites him. A Standard Four drop out, Wame does not preach about how people can attain wealth, get good jobs and prosper

in secular life. He does not preach about customs and traditions. One Shadrack Wame preaches about salvation.

Wame sees Christianity as being in three parts: the one outside the soul or the physical, the spiritual and then the inner side purely controlled by personal fellowship with God. Coordination of these parts brings salvation, he said. "If all these sections meet, it makes [one] a complete Christian...

He may be CCAP, but Wame has preached in congregations of other denominations. It is because God ordered him to preach Jesus Christ to all people regardless of denomination.

At the beginning of his ministry, he had a vision in which god made him carry a basket full of Bibles amid a shoal of fish. "The message to me was: 'These Bibles signify the job I am giving you; to preach to the world without bias, and the fish you see represents the people you will preach to'" he said.

Wame's unique preaching has existed in Malawi far longer than most of the preachers the nation has today... by what is seen in the churches and his power of appeal, Wame would have been filthy rich... But he has had to reject invitations to join churches that promised to give him offices of reverend, overseer, bishop or evangelist. "I am just an ordinary member of Msalura CCAP church," he said.

Even if he would [were to] perform a miracle, his principle is that he would not stand on rooftops about it for when someone achieves that, it is only with the power of God and "so it is not good to start feeling big and extraordinary."

Appendix D: Stephen Fula's Testimony and his Involvement with the Ministry of Linley Mbeta

Following his salvation Stephen Fula's testimony states that he got involved with the Fellowships right away. "Although I was going St Michael and All Angels my heart and mind was in my services in the Zingwangwa, Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer Group then the biggest fellowship in the City of Blantyre outside of New Life for All." It is like Zingwangwa, Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer Group had its influence in the 'birthing' of other fellowship in other city locations particularly in Ndirande and Bangwe. Fula states the he attended almost all New Life for All activities and important fellowship evangelistic meetings in Blantyre. He revealed he owed his spiritual growth from the spiritual mentorship of Reverend Duncan Bwanali from whom he gained inspiration and spiritual guidance.¹

What specifically stands out in Stephen Fula's testimony was the narration of a rare spiritual experience he had while attending a fellowship meeting where Bangwe Born Again Fellowship hosted Zingwangwa, Chilobwe Chimwankhunda Prayer Group. All the preaching on this day was done by members of visiting fellowship. While the proceedings of the meeting were in process Stephen Fula said "I clearly heard the voice of God distinctly calling me and asking me to consider serving his Church 'Stephen Fula, consider going back to my church and serve me there' Fula says he tried to reason with the 'voice' that as one of the Born Again members he was already actively ministering to God's people through Evangelism through the fellowships. He says he was left with the impression of God saying "Remember my Church, needs you to serve it there."

From that point on he says that his perspective on the Fellowship ministry changed "I saw that the Fellowships were not an end in

¹ Rev. Duncan Bwanali was a board member of Every Home Crusade and retired pastor from Zambezi Evangelical Church who also had a positive influence in Providence Industrial Mission (PIM) and was greatly respected in this Church.

themselves and that God had the church at his heart". He returned to his church, of course not as one that was dismissed or defrocked but as one with a different attitude towards his church. He says "I sensed that God had a deep desire to make himself known to his Church which I now recognized as God's primary quarters for his redemptive ministry."

Between 1982 to 1985 Stephen Fula and (particularly) his wife were closely connected to the fast rising ministry of Linley Mbeta which took Blantyre by storm. From Linley's own testimony, she claimed she died and encountered Jesus who sent her back with a commission to preach the gospel, discern witches and imposters who hide under the cover of Christian religiosity in the Churches and heal the sick with special powers in her cloth/towel which she wielded in her hand.² Her preaching was powerful and the intensity of her charisma affected the crowds. She warned people of the impending judgment awaiting those who reject Christ and die without repenting their sin.

She dutifully prayed for the sick with her towel in hand and reportedly some claimed instant healing. Stephen Fula and his wife were joined by Mathemba Kachipande and his wife in mentoring and supporting this young girl's ministry. Linley Mbeta preached with a fiery zeal of 'a dying man preaching to dying people.'³ Fula and his wife felt this was a ministry they needed to support. Besides they also offered mentorship and support to young Linley Mbeta. In her sermons, Linley Mbeta claimed that her rising from the dead cleansed her from all past filth and that she was now a spiritual 'virgin' and a kind of a 'Nazarite.' She was not going to get married but would live her whole life in holy celibacy.

The team of mature Christians including Fula offered her counsel also played the role of being her administration managers literally handling

² This towel allegedly was used to cover her face when she allegedly died as she claims to have died and resuscitated from death in her testimony she shared at Blantyre Bus Stage and again repeated at Soche Baptist Church at Kamba where she was invited to speak by Pastor Botomani Nkhoma.

³ Rev. Gideon Bomba often reminded Fellowships of the urgency to preach the gospel.

her schedule, appointments and other logistics until the later part of 1985/86 when Bishop Mnkumbwe's ministry took over this role. It seems that her influence took a dive because her role was now limited to the denominational boundaries of Bishop Mnkumbwe's ministry and church. The ministry and influence of Mbete has since declined and few people in Blantyre hear of Linley Mbete's ministry exploits.

Meanwhile Stephen Fula became fully reintegrated in his Church St Michael and All Angels and soon became a deacon, then a church elder in Blantyre. His evangelistic ministry was well utilized in this Church and also within the Evangelical Association of Malawi. Fula is now retired (from Air Malawi) and continues to be utilized in evangelism by his Church the Central African Presbyterian [CCAP] in his home district of Kasungu.

Appendix E: Photos of some People who Inspired Born Againism in Blantyre



The Reverend Bomba was a great inspiration to Born Again groups in Blantyre

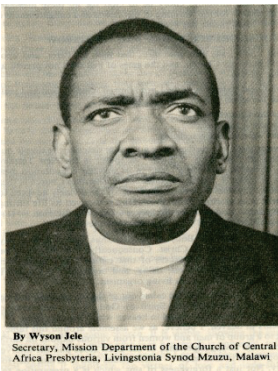


Pastor Pat Banda, a prolific speaker standing in a sky-blue Jacket was Senior founding member of EHC.

Banda and also served as Presidential Advisor on religious affairs in the Muluzi Administration



Rev. Galatiya dressed in black pair of trousers



By Wyson Jele
Secretary, Mission Department of the Church of Central Africa Presbyteria, Livingstonia Synod Mzuzu, Malawi

New Life for All groups in Blantyre knew Rev. Dr Wyson



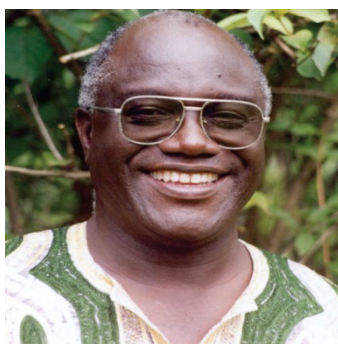
Florence Yeboah of Ghanaian origin a prolific expositor of the scriptures and a regular guest speaker at both the Blantyre Keswick Convention, PACWA and other EAM Women's groups in Blantyre and Malawi in general.



Yeboah is seen standing with Malawian women at a PACWA conference. On her right is Mai Hilda Luwani on her extreme left is Mai Thindwa both were leaders among women in the EAM and the Blantyre Keswick Convention.



Enoch Phiri is a product of the Blantyre Born



Stephen Lungu, International Head of Africa Enterprise. He once worked for Dorothea Mission before joining Africa Enterprise as Malawi Team leader.



Kawamba, Zuze interpreting for Thindwa who was preaching at the GFA Hotel Outreach Rally at Mt Soche Hotel



A section of the crowd that filled the Njamba in 1980. Front row: GFA Member Mai Unyolo interacting with Hesmoth Tsilizani.



Wambali singing at the GFA Hotel Outreach. Seated from left to right: Mkolesia, Kawamba, Unyolo and Thindwa in 1980.



From the left to the right: Kawamba with GFA Stalwarts Ezekiel Kachaje sitting and Abel Sauti standing.



Come to Jesus Choir singing at a New Life for All meeting



Come to Jesus Choir singing at St Michael and All Angels in Blantyre on 26th July 1980. Ivy Mlaka replaced Costly Gondwe after the latter got married and left Blantyre for Nairobi.

Appendix F: The Background to the Song '*Kale ndinali Wochimwa*'

The background to the song '*Kale ndinali Wochimwa*' emerges from Victor Zuze's personal story and testimony of his salvation experience. The song became a major hit of Come to Jesus Choir. To date Victor Zuze, is still a well known Gospel musician in Blantyre and still carries with him the fame of Come to Jesus Choir which in a way was his brainchild. Victor was born in 1956 in Chilomoni in Blantyre from devout Christian parents. This is how he narrates his story and testimony.



Victor Zuze

From the age of five, Victor began going to Sunday school. But the fact that he went to Church every Sunday did not actually make him a Christian. Victor admits. "I remember very clearly, my elder sister and I, when we left church we passed through the missionaries' quarters where there used to be an orchard with all kinds of fruits. It was very tempting to look at all this ripening fruit but there used to be a man who was guarding the orchard. My sister was daring and she convinced me we would steal some of this fruit but that meant evading the man guarding the plantation. She would say 'stand here and tell me if you see anyone coming'. I had a very sensitive conscience particularly that I was taught stealing and any act of thievery was sin in Sunday school and all the while my conscience was troubled but I cooperated and stood there to watch while my sister did the sinister work.

He also remembers how he paid so dearly for his disobedience when his mother told him not to ride on a friend's bicycle, but he didn't listen and took the ride. He remembers waking up on hospital bed following a fateful fall from a bicycle which he rode in disobedience to his mother. He says that he fainted from the impact of the fall. He says that he

lamented with deep conviction over his disobedience of his mother and cried for forgiveness from the Lord. He pledged he would not do such a thing at all. However this lamentation did not make me a Christian. He remembers that he felt that there was a vacuum in his heart and he tried a few things including going to a recreational centre the Blantyre Youth center opposite Queen Elizabeth Hospital which was a beehive of social activities but even being there seemed not to fulfill what he was missing.

He says “I didn't feel I belonged there and I decided never to go there again.” The feeling of emptiness became worse as time passed until a preacher from Tanzania came to his church in 1972 and he bellowed 'You must come to the Lord. You must be born again, but if you don't make a commitment to Jesus and don't give your life to Christ by way of repentance and leaving behind your sinful life and turning to Jesus you can't be a Christian.' It was at this point that Victor felt he had found what he had been looking for. He called this experience a “new song” of his life which led him to compose “*Kale Ndinali Ochimwa*” (In the past I was a sinner).¹

¹ Int. Victor Zuze, 2000. The photo inserted is a recent photograph.

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In Christian history spiritual awakenings are a recurring and important phenomenon. They revive existing churches and they make people who never thought of it, become dedicated followers of Jesus Christ. They create new organizations and new music. All that happened in Blantyre in the 1970s, spreading to other parts of Malawi. The Blantyre Awakening revived Evangelical Christianity in Malawi and prepared the way for the emerging Charismatic Movement.



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